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# SHEET-ANCHOR TOM;

OR,

## THE SUNKEN TREASURE.

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# SHEET-ANCHOR TOM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### OUTWARD BOUND.

BOUND to Rio Janeiro for cotton, Brazil-wood and precious stones, the ship Meteor, passing through the Narrows, saluted the gray old Atlantic with every thing humming.

Sandy Hook had faded to a blue line, about four points abaft the weather-beam, and the vessel was tumbling among the heavy swells, when a sudden squall came pouncing upon her from the north-west. She took it like a spoiled coquette, showing her pretty heels and screaming as she ran. Away went the jib in tatters, and her fore and main-topmast studding-sails, flapping thunder, were carried, swift as a shot, straight up into the whirling rack of the storm. The active crew, having clewed up and down, were scattered among cracking spars and rolling canvas, to shorten sail, when the skipper of the ship—"Captain Tom," as he was familiarly termed—came on deck. His trumpet voice made every man pause.

"That's *he* ; it will soon pass over !"

Even as he spoke the storm, with one farewell howl, swept to leeward like a black giant, carrying off its prey—the studding-sails torn from the Meteor.

Having ordered new ones rigged, Captain Tom walked his quarter-deck with the ease of a man accustomed to the rolling of a ship. He was a tall, well-made fellow, active as a panther, with curling black hair, clear, dark eyes, ready to look every man full in the face, and a pleasant, manly, sun-browned countenance. Although but twenty-five years old, yet he was quite well known among seafaring men. He was reputed to be rather wild and unmanageable, but strictly honest, and a good fellow in the main. A few years previously he had distinguished himself by saving the lives of more than a dozen passengers aboard a steamer, burnt off the coast of

California, for which gallant behavior the owner of the *Meteor* had promoted him from a second mate to the command of his fine ship.

"Ay, ay," Tom muttered to himself, glancing round at his new, clean decks, his tapering spars, snow-white canvas and shapely hull; "I'm a lucky chap—that's plain. Here we go, bowling along for the Brazils, with a fair wind—the *Meteor* Captain Tom. It sounds *queer*—*that* does; but then, it's the truth. I *am* skipper of this craft, and I'll do my duty by her and all aboard."

At that moment Tom heard some person, with a low, musical voice, asking him if the storm was quite over.

Turning, he beheld Isabel Morton, daughter of the *Meteor's* owner, a beautiful young girl of eighteen, just come up from the cabin.

She was of lithe, graceful figure, hollow in the back, and well rounded, with a smooth, oval face, and pearl-white skin. Her eyes, when calm, looked blue, but when most expressive seemed nearly black, and shot the full power of feminine magnetism straight before her. She was of queenly bearing, but not at all haughty, either in manner or appearance. Her step, while dignified and elastic, was so light that a grasshopper would not have been injured by the pressure of her small feet. She had a wealth of blue-black hair, which, when loosened, hung below her waist in heavy, shining, undulating masses. As to the tones of her voice and laugh, they were as musical as the rippling, silvery notes of a piano, when a light hand is swept over the keys, enchanting all who listened.

Captain Tom, accustomed to the roar of winds and waves, was naturally very sensitive to a girlish voice. He turned, colored and lifted his cap, rather awkwardly, as he answered her question. There he stood, motionless as a statue, looking shyly at her with mingled respect and admiration, and with that curious feeling of humility with which an intelligent beautiful woman inspires a man not accustomed to female society. Tom, bred to the sea almost from childhood, never had exchanged ten words with a woman of refinement. An orphan upon the ocean at eleven years, he had associated principally with the wild, island girls of the Pacific, the dark-eyed

damselfs of Chili, and those tawny specimens of the softer sex, the short, squat, square-headed female whale-eaters of the Esquimaux coast.

Nevertheless, no man knew better than he how to *appreciate* noble women; for he had *read* of them, not only in English, but also in French and Latin, of which, by hard study, he had acquired an excellent knowledge.

Isabel did not seem to notice the captain's embarrassment. With a sweet smile she glanced from him to windward, where the morning sunlight was weaving thousands of diminutive rainbows amid the flying spray.

"Beautiful!" she exclaimed. "I really begin to envy you sailor-men."

"I never before saw *such* a sight," said the gallant captain, staring straight at the countenance of his lovely companion.

She glanced at him, but he was afraid to meet her eyes. He turned his own toward the beautiful mist-spray to windward, and she thought he had alluded to *that*. I doubt that, even had she understood him aright, she would have cared much for the compliment. The girl's invalid father was aboard the vessel, a sea-voyage having been recommended to him by his physicians. His daughter had accompanied him for two reasons—to be near her parent, whom she tenderly loved, and to get rid—for awhile, at least—of her many suitors, who, attracted as much by her father's wealth as by her beauty, had wearied her with their attentions. She had hoped that at sea she would have a brief resting-spell; but she was disappointed. Her parent took with him his head clerk, William Clyde, a young, handsome man, of easy address, who had long, while keeping at a respectful distance, shown the beautiful girl that he admired her. At first she had pitied this suitor, who assumed that air of modest diffidence which he knew well would take with a woman of Isabel's stamp. Soon, however, the clear-sighted girl read through his affectation, and despised him for that as well as for his selfishness, his cunning, and his disposition to slander his rivals.

Gliding to her side just as she was about making a second remark to the captain, the young clerk drew her into conversation.

Thereupon Captain Tom turned and moved away, sighing heavily.

"No chance for me," he thought, "against such a 'swell' as that."

He walked into the waist, and stood watching his men getting up the maintop-mast studding-sail. Soon a rain-cloud passed over the ship, and the drops began to fall.

Of course the sailors did not mind the rain; they worked on, singing as they toiled.

"That's the right spirit, men," said Captain Tom. "Work away, and when you are through, we'll just 'splice' a little, do you see; not enough to get drunk, though. I'll have none of that in *my* craft."

"Ay, ay, sir; hooray!"

"A couple of tauts, that's *all*," continued the young skipper.

"Hooray! *hoo-ray*!"

"And still another, after, just to wash down the t'other two. As to those that don't want the extra taut, why they can just let it alone, that's all."

"Hooray! hooray! *hoo-ray*!"

The captain took off his cap and bowed.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," remarked an old square-shouldered tar named Bill Turk—"there's something in the fokestel (forecastle) that won't come up—a queer creatur' that I can't make out."

"I don't understand you, my man; what is it?"

"Well," answered Turk, "it ain't a ship-shape man, and it ain't a spook, and it ain't a grown-up barnacle. Blast me, sir, if I know *what* it is," he added, hurling his quid overboard.

Tom's curiosity was aroused; he was about moving forward, when he heard a hum of astonishment around him, and saw all the seamen on deck glancing up toward the foretop-gallant cross-trees. Some of them were grinning in a peculiar manner. Old Turk, half kneeling, with a hand upon each knee, and his shoulders hoisted above his ears, had his face all puckered up like a shriveled cabbage.

"That's the creatur' that wouldn't come up," said the old fellow. "Ay, ay, that's him, sure enough."

Tom followed the direction of all eyes, and saw seated on

the cross-trees, one of his foremast hands—a very low sized man, wearing an enormous, glazed hat, and with a wooden box slung to his shoulder, while in one hand he held a blue umbrella, spread open above his head to keep off the rain.

An umbrella carried by a seaman aboard a ship! Surely such a case was never known before.

“My eyes,” continued Turk, drawing a long breath, while the murmur of wonder grew louder and louder, “My *ey-ay-YES!*”

Other equally expressive remarks were heard.

“Ahoy, there!” roared Captain Tom. “In the name of a thousand sea-devils, my man, what are you doing aloft there, with an *umbrella*, aboard my ship?”

Thus addressed, the person aloft turned a square, flat, ~~so~~ face, with a red nose, toward the speaker.

“Excuse me, sir. I came aloft to see if I could discover so far north, any specimens of the *exocoetus volitans*, or flying fish.”

“Never mind the flying-fish, but just fly down here, yourself, as fast as you can. Don’t you see there is work going on?”

The man descended to the deck.

“What is your name?” inquired Tom.

“Toby Slivers,” was the reply. “Permit me, captain, to show you the curiosities in my box. I am a *naturalist*, but being too poor to take passage, I shipped here as foremast-hand, for the purpose of pursuing my investigations in foreign lands and waters.”

“Never mind your curiosities now, but just bear in mind that when there’s work you must take a hand in it. I’ll have no shirking in my craft.”

“Indeed, I did not intend to shirk,” said Toby, dolefully “Please tell me what I am to do.”

He dropped his blue umbrella, rolled up his sleeves, and to show his zeal, threw the maintop-sail halliards off the pin, thereby causing the yard to come down by the run. A turn of the running rope caught him round his waist and drew him up a few feet, struggling and kicking.

“Enough,” said the captain, as he helped the poor fellow down; “that will *do*. It is plain you’ve never been to sea

before. I'll let you be my clerk, to keep a clean account of my writings and copy off my last year's log. You may at once go into the cabin and commence."

Accordingly, with his umbrella under his arm, Toby entered the cabin. He quickly had an interested audience—Isabel, Mr. Clyde and Mr. Morton, who came to see the butterflies, and other insects in his box. Soon, however, the naturalist remembered the writing he was to do, and went to work.

Later, the men were rigging the new maintop-mast studding-sail, and Captain Tom, who was fond of working aloft, went up to assist them, with marline-spike in one hand and ratline-stuff in the other.

A surer hand or foot than Captain Tom's was never known. He had been seen to climb the leach of a slatting sail in a gale of wind, and to walk atop of a boom when his craft was plunging bows under. Now, however, chancing to glance toward the quarter-deck, he caught the full glory of Isabel's blue eyes; and such was their power over him, that he lost his balance and tumbled headlong into the sea, marline-spike, ratline-stuff and all!

Isabel shrieked; the cry of "Man overboard!" thrilled through the ship, and "Down with that wheel—haul back the main yard!" shouted the first mate.

A boat, headed by the second officer, and manned by a good crew, soon was in the water. They looked around them as the boat flew, and saw plenty of blue water, but no sign of the captain except his hat. Pulling for this hat they picked it up and found blood upon it.

"My God! I'm afraid he's lost!" cried the second mate. "It's plain now that his head struck the rail when he fell. I *thought* I heard the thug of the stroke when he tumbled."

With heavy hearts the men pulled hither and thither, until they suddenly heard a shout astern of them. There, a few fathoms distant, they saw the captain. They pulled for him and he clambered into the boat, disclosing a bruised and bleeding forehead.

"Are you hurt much, sir?" inquired the second mate.

"Not much," was the reply. "I only grazed the rail. Have the lads got that studding-sail up yet?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

Soon after, the captain was aboard ship. Mr. Morton and his daughter both came anxiously forward, the girl's eyes full of pity.

"All right," said Tom, cheerily; "only a scratch!"

The steward appeared with a cloth, soaked in cold water, to bind around the bruised head. Isabel took it from him and tied it round the wound with her own fair fingers. Sailor-men, she said, were not quite so expert in such matters as women. The touch of those fingers made Tom thrill all over. He would have been willing to fall again to have it repeated.

A moment later the steward proclaimed dinner, and they descended into the cabin. The three passengers dined at the same table with the captain.

"When we are through," said the latter to the steward, "carry a couple of bottles forward, and give each man three tauts apiece. If the rascals want more, just tell 'em they can't have it."

"So you permit your men to drink?" remarked Mr. Clyde

"Ay, ay, when they've been working hard."

"I believe you were helping them work when you fell?"

"I was."

"It seems to me that, were I as used to going aloft as you are, captain, I should not have fallen."

"Ay, ay, it *was* clumsy of me," said Tom, taking the speech in good part. Then, encountering Isabel's soft eyes, he laughed and colored.

"Big men, I believe, seldom have much command of their limbs," pursued the clerk.

Tom made no reply. Perhaps the presence of Isabel operated as a check upon his temper.

"There's an old saying, 'Big frame, little spirit;' but of course that's a slander," continued Mr. Clyde.

Here Mr. Morton endeavored to change the subject, and Isabel frowned severely upon the clerk. Believing, however, that in reality she was pleased with his audacity, Clyde continued his bantering remarks. Tom did not seem to hear him; in fact, the presence of Isabel threw a sort of mist between him and the others.

Stung by the contempt with which he was treated, Clyde continued.

"You must be more careful, in future, captain, when you go aloft. Your falling gave Miss Morton a severe shock. You have no right, you know, to trouble your passengers in that way."

"Why," exclaimed Tom, thrown off his guard, "it was those splendid eyes of hers that made me tumble!"

At this Isabel blushed like a sunset cloud, while Clyde drew down the corners of his mouth.

"Oh, shocking!" he ejaculated, in a most expressive manner. "Do you suppose that Miss Morton will believe that nonsense?"

"Why, now, blast you, what do you mean?" inquired Tom, springing up.

"Gentlemen, no quarreling here!" said Mr. Morton, gravely; "pray, sit down again."

"I mean what I say!" exclaimed Clyde, sneering under his black mustache. "I mean to assert that you tell an untruth—that your fall was *not* caused by Miss Morton's eyes."

A blow—a crash—a whizzing sound! Down went Mr. Clyde, headlong into a corner.

"Captain, I am astonished at you!" exclaimed Mr. Morton. "Striking a clerk of mine—quarreling in the presence of my daughter!"

"I am a wretch," answered the captain, glancing at Isabel's white, terrified face. "I should have controlled my unfortunate temper."

Meanwhile, Clyde, almost stunned and much bewildered by the captain's unexpected sally, had picked himself up and entered his room. Just then Toby Slivers, the naturalist, came forth, stating that the jar of Clyde's falling had caused him to make a great blot upon one of the pages of the log-book.

"Never mind," answered Tom, disconsolately, as he hurried on deck. "I have just made a worse blot than that."

He was thoughtfully walking his quarter-deck, when, feeling a hand on his arm, he turned to behold Clyde.

"You must give me satisfaction," he whispered.

"Well, heave ahead at once, like an honest man, and tell me just what you want!"

"Satisfaction! You must fight me with pistols."

‘Any way or any where you please,’ answered Tom, indifferently.

“In Brazil we can find some solitary spot, where we may fight out our quarrel face to face!”

“Why, now, that’s speaking like a man!” cried Tom, extending his hand, “and I respect you for it.”

Clyde declined the proffered hand.

“Remember,” he said, turning away, “one or the other of us shall never leave Brazil alive.”

“Ay, ay,” answered Tom. “Forward, there, one of you,” he blithely added, addressing his men; “aloft there, and clear the gasket at the foretop-gallant yard!”

All hands were busy except the steerage-boy—a lad who had never before been to sea, and who seemed loth to go aloft while the ship rolled and plunged among the seas. The mate, noticing his hesitation, picked up a rope’s end to administer punishment, when Tom interfered.

“None of that aboard *my* craft!” he said, sternly. “The lad is green, and will learn after awhile. Send up one of the men.”

Isabel, who had just come on deck, and who, with woman’s quick sympathy, would have interfered if Tom had not, felt the justice of his proceeding.

“He seems to be a man of good principle, this captain, in spite of his roughness,” she said, mentally.

Then she fell into a fit of musing, now and then glancing toward the main-topsail yard, from which Tom had fallen, on account of her eyes.

“I have been complimented many times,” she muttered, half-smiling, “but never before like that.”

From that time she would often, unobserved by the captain, watch him while he worked. He had not dared to address a word to her since his encounter with Clyde, believing that she was angry with him for having given way to his temper. He was therefore much pleased when, one morning, she came up to his side and conversed with him about his ship. Clyde stood a few paces distant, watching the two with jealous eyes. He saw on the girl’s face a look of interest which he did not half like.

In due course of time the vessel drew near the coast of

Brazil. To the south-west was seen the lofty summit of Square-topsail Mountain, rising seven thousand feet above the sea, and further to the north, the conical Sugar-loaf, surrounded by blue hills. As the craft drew nearer, the many little islands in the bay, covered with the banana, the orange, the lemon and the palm, became visible. Behind the foliage the granite buildings, monuments, and ill-paved streets of Rio Janeiro were indistinctly seen, looming up from a light mist. Entering Botofogo Bay, the captain kept on, standing for a snug little inlet between two sloping hills near the city. Finally the craft was anchored, and Tom at once lowered his quarter-boat to take Isabel and her father ashore. The ship-owner intended, during the vessel's stay in port, to remain, with his daughter, in the mansion of an old Portuguese merchant—a friend with whom he often transacted business.

Soon the boat struck the beach, and Captain Tom had the pleasure of helping Isabel out. He stood watching her until she was no longer in sight, when he set out for a stroll through the town, leaving orders with his men to be in waiting for him at nine o'clock. At this hour he returned, to learn that one of those who had come ashore with him—Toby, the naturalist—had gone off and not yet come back. The men seemed to think that he had deserted, as he had hurried off without telling them where he was going.

On hearing this, Captain Tom at once set out to hunt up the man, whom he could not afford to lose, being already short-handed.

He hunted in many different quarters, but saw nothing of Toby, until he came in sight of the academy of natural history, in the southern part of the town, when he thought he beheld the little man passing along one of the balconies. Having gained entrance to the building, he finally discovered the naturalist perched upon the back of a huge, stuffed, black bear, which he was examining with great attention.

"Come," said the captain, "it is time you were aboard."

"Yes, sir; but allow me to direct your attention to the head of this curious specimen of the *Ursus Americanus* or American bear. You will perceive that it contains a perfectly-formed pearl-shell fixed in the skull! How very singular! I can not imagine how it *could* have happened?"

As he spoke, one of the keepers of the academy came up and asked him if he wished to make a deposit.

"A deposit?"

"Yes," was the reply; "to help us pay expenses."

So saying, the man drew forth a small key, and thrusting it into an aperture in the pearl-shell, opened the latter, disclosing the small contribution-box scooped in the bear's skull.

Much mortified and disappointed, Toby Slivers jumped down and followed Tom, who, throwing a silver piece into the box, hurried out of the building.

They had not proceeded far when Tom felt some person touch him on the arm, and turning, beheld Clyde.

"Can you go with me now?" he inquired, significantly.

"Ay, ay," answered Tom, cheerily.

Bidding Toby go on to the boat, he followed Clyde, who walked on until the two had reached a retired spot in a valley.

Then the clerk drew a couple of pistols from his coat-pocket, and presenting one to the captain, walked to the distance of about fifteen paces.

"Now, then, when I give the word, we will fire!" he said, clenching his teeth.

"All right. I'm ready when you are," was the reply.

Clyde soon gave the word, and his bullet passed through Tom's hat. The captain's weapon did not go off.

Much surprised, he picked up a little stick, and thrusting it into the muzzle, discovered that the pistol was not loaded!

He sprung forward and caught Clyde by the throat.

"Why, you contemptible rascal!" he exclaimed.

A fierce light was in his eyes; but he controlled himself, and thrust the clerk away from him.

"Go—you are not worth striking," he said, contemptuously.

White with excitement, Mr. Clyde slunk away and was soon out of sight. Tom reached the boat, soon after, and was pulled aboard.

## CHAPTER II.

## HOMEWARD BOUND.

IN a few weeks, the Meteor's cargo being stowed, her captain was ready to sail. He had seen nothing of Clyde since the affair of the pistol; but, Mr. Morton had informed him that he had sent his clerk direct to New York on business, by a homeward-bound steamer, which left port a few days previously.

The ship's owner and his daughter were now aboard. Isabel showed a woman's delight and interest, at sight of the small cases of precious stones which had been packed away in a chest in one of the cabin rooms, and which her father had given her permission to examine.

The beautiful chrysoberyl and topazes of yellow, white and blue, sparkled as if containing little moving rivulets of fire and water. There was among the collection a box of rare specimens of the Brazilian precious stone—a stone blue on one side, and perfectly clear and colorless on the other.

During the vessel's stay in port, Toby Slivers, the naturalist, had not failed to obtain a few curiosities of the insect tribe from the beautiful banks of the rivers. The little menelaus with its shining blue wings, together with the Nestor and Laertes, were added to the collection of butterflies in his box. He had seen a green parrot among the branches of some stupendous Brazilian trees, and had endeavored to capture it; but he was obliged to give it up after being badly scratched, and otherwise injured from climbing and trampling through swamps.

The afternoon was clear and cloudless when the Meteor went out of port with the land-breeze.

By noon of the next day the land was out of sight. The silver flying-fish sported merrily round the bows, and the whistling porpoises were seen leaping and tumbling to windward. Isabel came up and conversed so pleasantly with captain Tom, that, when she went below, soon after, he was as if the sun had gone out of the heavens.

As day after day passed, the heart of the honest fellow was so full of the beautiful girl, that he thought of her every moment.

Turk, who now was promoted third mate, could not help reading the young man's feelings.

"Beggin' your pardon, captain," said he, one morning, "you seem sort of subtracted (abstracted) of late. Something's on your mind."

"Ay, Turk," answered Tom, frankly; "there's no use of hiding it. You can guess what it is."

"Easy enough, captain; but why not tell the girl you love her, and bring things to a p'int?"

"I can't muster courage. She's too good for me, you know."

"She is a splendid creatur'; but then, do you see, cap, opposites sometimes comes together. Now there was a chum of mine named Croaker. He was as poor as an old piece of spun-yarn, but he married the darter of a rag-marchant, worth his thousands."

"You should know," answered Tom, smiling, "that it's the fact of Isabel Morton being *rich* that *prevents* my telling her how much I like her."

"I wouldn't be so particular," said Turk. "If I were in your place, I'd go to her and tell all. Leave it to me," he added; "I'll make things right if you'll let me."

"You?"

"Ay, ay, sir; you just wait; you'll see."

Turk entered the cabin, and, having procured a piece of letter-paper, drew thereon what he intended for a very moving picture of a heart with an arrow sticking in it. He put it in an envelope, sealed it, and slipped it under the door leading into Isabel's apartment. She was now on deck, but in less than half an hour after, she entered her room to see the note.

Opening it, she discovered the paper containing the picture, which surprised her very much, especially as she was unable to make it out.

At length she concluded it was the representation of some kind of a queer fish with a harpoon thrust through the center. Underneath were these words, scrawled in a large, irregular hand.

"EMBLIM OF LUV. CAPTIN TOM'Z STAFF."

She smiled, and while much amused, wondered who was the author of the note.

She knew it could not be Captain Tom, having heard her father say that this person was a good scholar for a seaman. She went on deck, and soon divined who had sent her the drawing; for old Turk betrayed himself by his significant manner of watching her. She beckoned him to her side and showed him the paper.

"Did you draw this *fish*?" she inquired.

"*Fish*!" exclaimed Turk, coloring deeply; "beg pardon, Miss, but it isn't a fish—it's a heart as is involved in *you*; the heart of Captain Tom, pierced by an arrer. The lad's dead in love with you, ma'am."

Isabel blushed and frowned a little. Then, seeing the skipper approaching, she descended into the cabin. She picked up a book, and, seating herself by her window, began reading without taking in the sense of the words. The frank, honest face of the young captain kept intruding itself upon her mind.

Early the next morning she was wakened from a sweet sleep by the hurried trampling of feet over her head. As soon as she had completed her toilet, she mounted to the quarter-deck to find her father already there, gazing anxiously off the weather-bow.

"What is it, papa?"

The old man pointed toward the north-east horizon.

"They say we are going to have a heavy blow."

Isabel looked, but could see nothing alarming, unless it were a thin, yellowish haze that floated where sky and water seemed to meet.

"Is *that* what you mean, papa?"

"That is not all: look higher up."

She did so, and now beheld a little, revolving cloud of a reddish brown, advancing along the sky. The cloud was surrounded by a luminous circle, something like that which is often noticed around the moon. Now and then a lurid lightning-flash would shoot from the revolving mass, followed by a crackling, grinding report, like that of a military "coffee-mill."

"How curious," ejaculated the girl. "But, surely, there is nothing to fear from that insignificant cloud."

As she spoke, however, she noticed that the men were battenning down the hatches and striking top-gallant-masts and yards with the utmost dispatch. Extra lashings were being passed round the boats, while fore and aft parties were busy taking in sail aloft. Captain Tom, who had assisted in furling the jib, now came aft trumpet in hand.

He lifted his cap to Isabel: then drew the old gentleman aside and said a few words to him.

"Come, we had better go below," remarked Mr. Morton, to his daughter.

"Captain," said the young girl, anxiously laying her arm on the skipper's shoulder, "disguise nothing from *me*. We are to experience great peril, are we not?"

"Ay, ay, Miss, we're going to have a rough time of it," answered Tom; "but, I trust you need have no fear. Bear a hand, there, lads!" he added, cheerily, addressing the men who were striking. "Lively is the word!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" came down from aloft, and just as the words were spoken, a rattling, crackling sound, like the din of artillery coming nearer and nearer, was heard in the far distance.

At the same moment Mr. Morton paused, and half turning, uttered a cry of wonder which was echoed by every man in the ship. It was caused by a sudden curious agitation of a large space of water, about a mile to windward. Here, the waves rushing together with a thundering noise like that of a great whirlpool, suddenly sent upward great sheets of spray and foam that seemed to touch the very skies. This curious fountain, which was of a yellowish purple color, was, it soon became evident, caused by a mighty whirlwind, bearing down toward the ship with frightful velocity.

"My God, we are lost!" cried Mr. Morton.

"Keep off, there, at the wheel!" shouted Tom, cheerily, his voice ringing like the clang of a cymbal.

Still the whirlwind fountain bore toward the craft, advancing like some stupendous phantom giant, with mouth and nostrils roaring thunder.

Isabel shrieked with terror.

"God help us!" she cried, with trembling voice.

"That's *he*! Steady as you are!" shouted the young skipper, swinging himself into the mizzen-shrouds, as he addressed the man at the wheel. "A pull on the fore and main braces!"

Slowly the ship fell off, and with a buzzing, whizzing, booming noise, the huge moving fountain swept upon its way, just grazing the rail as it passed. Its course was as swift as that of the shadow of a flying cloud, and it grew smaller and smaller in the distance as it swept on until it seemed no larger than the mast of a schooner.

Meanwhile the little cloud was rolling rapidly upon its way, growing larger every moment. The crackling, grinding noise deepened, and the lightning-flashes became incessant. The air seemed full of electricity; sparks, rings, and little chains of fire filled the thickening atmosphere. At the same moment the whitening of the agitated water to windward proclaimed the nearness of the tempest. A din equal to the roar of a thousand cataracts was heard; the timbers of the stout ship began to hum and quiver as if already feeling the shock. The air grew darker and darker, until the red sun was veiled by a vapor like black smoke.

Mr. Morton drew Isabel into the cabin not a moment too soon.

"Up helm—mind yourself at that wheel!" came Tom's cheering voice; and then, with wind, lightning, thunder, and sheets of driving spray and rain, the storm dashed itself against the ship.

Lower and lower—far over on her beam-ends she went, humming and quivering from stem to stern, with her three topmasts bending and cracking like willows, and her solitary pieces of canvas—the close-reefed maintop-sail and topmast staysail flying to shreds.

A moment she remained almost stationary, then, like some huge sea-monster, tossing her bows far on high, she shook from her the cataracts of rushing water, and shot straight ahead with the speed of a wounded whale. Meanwhile the seas pursuing, came bubbling, boiling, roaring and gurgling over bow and quarter, almost burying her at times, and compelling all hands to struggle hard to keep from being washed away. The shrouds, with the wind whistling and screaming

in them, snapped at every plunge, and the long yards creaked dolefully in the slings. All around the vessel, the electric fires were continually visible, running along the yards, down the masts, and along the rails like little fiery serpents, while broader and more vivid flashes lighted the roaring, gurgling ocean. The noise of the thunder was almost unintermittent, clanging, rolling and crashing, like some huge brazen wheel rushing over an iron floor. At each flash the seamen believed they could see a huge fiery ball, about ten times as large as the sun, a mile to windward, suspended midway between sky and sea. This appearance is quite common during the terrific thunder-storms which sometimes occur off the Brazilian coast; but it would be impossible to give a true conception of the strange, ghastly, lurid light which the monstrous fire-globe throws at such times over the phosphor-lighted waters, as they roll bouncing along toward the black horizon. The force of the gale kept increasing, so that at times the madly-plunging ship seemed lifted up to the very clouds on the shrieking wind.

Mr. Morton and his daughter, down in the cabin, were bewildered by the motion of the ship.

Isabel, feeling the vessel suddenly roll over so that her lee yard-arms were immersed, crept, faint and trembling with fright, up the companion-way, and peered through a small opening in the slide over the entrance.

At the same moment she heard a terrible cry:

"Land, 'O! two points off the lee-bow!"

"What's that? Land?" gasped Mr. Morton.

"Yes, papa."

"I'm afraid it's all up with the Meteor," Isabel heard Turkey, as he passed the cabin.

The girl clasped her hands, and uttered a low cry.

"Let us pray!" said Toby Slivers, who had crept to her side.

"Hard—a-port!" shouted Captain Tom, without.

"Ah, my God, we are lost!" moaned Isabel, as she caught a glimpse of the huge, frowning walls of rock ahead, seeming much nearer than they were in reality.

"Loose the foresail!" cried Captain Tom.

"It is no use," sighed Toby Slivers. "We had better say our prayers."

"Steady—as—you—go!" roared the young skipper, cheerily, through his trumpet.

Mr. Morton now made his way to the deck.

"My ship—my cargo—our lives—all are drowned!" he said, despairingly, as the foresail, which the men could only half-loosen, flew into shreds.

"Clear away that sheet anchor!" thundered Captain Tom, lightly swinging himself into the mizzen-rigging.

"The Lord have mercy upon us!" gasped Toby Slivers creeping out on deck and falling on his knees.

"A pull on the lee main-brace!" roared the young captain.

Encouraged by his voice, the men obeyed every order as promptly as the seas sweeping the decks would permit them to do. As previously mentioned, the land was off the lee bow. A light mist, which slightly veiled without hiding it, rendered its appearance all the more terrible on that account. Rock above rock, pile upon pile, rose in rugged pyramids, while beneath the thunder-water of the storm, madly striking against the base, sent great sheets of spray flying up half-way to the summit of the elevation. The seamen, watching the rocks, saw several huge birds, in attempting to fly round an angle of the cliff, blown against it with such force that they were unable to disengage themselves. Their mad shrieks were heard, thrilling through the storm din, so like the despairing cries of a drowning crew, that many of the men shrugged their shoulders superstitiously as they listened.

Meanwhile, the ship was now dashing along upon a course which, unless the maintop-sail helped her, and she obeyed her helm better than at present, must carry her straight to her doom against the rocky wall.

Captain Tom, providing himself with a telescope, scrutinized the shore closely, and soon concluded that there was a bay beyond the south-east angle of the cliff, partially sheltered from the storm. He could form no decided conclusion as to what part of the Brazil coast he was approaching; but he did not think that he was more than four hundred miles to the southward of Rio Janeiro.

His every effort now must be directed to getting the craft into the bay beyond the cliff, and to accomplish this, more

canvas was required. Therefore, he ordered the men to stake a reef out of the maintop-sail and loosen the mainsail—maneuvers difficult of accomplishment, in such a gale. They *were* accomplished, however, and the mainsail being made of extra good cloth, held stoutly.

Captain Tom himself now assisted the man at the wheel, and with great exertion the ship was brought up about half a point, so that she ran in a direction nearly at right-angles with the cliff. Whether or not she would succeed in passing the edge of it, beyond which was the bay, remained to be seen. Old Turk shook his head doubtfully, and the second mate looked very black, but Tom's face was full of hope.

"We will pass it," he said, "if the mainsail stands, when we can run into the bay and drop our anchors, which, if they hold, will make us all right."

"I think it's doubtful if they'll hold," said Turk. "There's no very good holding-ground in these parts."

"Captain," said Mr. Morton, sadly, "I suppose we must prepare for our fate."

"Well, the truth is," said Tom, "you may be right. Still, there's hope yet. All ready, men!" he added. "Stand by the cable!"

The rocks were now frightfully near. Turk set his teeth hard, the first and second mates fairly trembled with suspense. Captain Tom was the only man whose face did not change as the vessel flew on toward the edge of the cliff. This was now less than a mile ahead, so that the crew were enabled to perceive that a strong current ran around it with great swiftness.

"That current will settle us!" said the second mate.

"It will help us!" replied Tom.

"We shall soon see," cried Turk.

Booming on, the vessel soon was within twenty fathoms of the rocky point.

At the same moment, with a report like thunder, the mainsheet gave way and the sail flew to tatters. Caught in one of the eddy currents, the vessel was drawn with frightful rapidity toward the dangerous point.

"No help for us, now!" howled Turk, hurling his quid into the sea.

"God have mercy upon us!" cried Mr. Morton, throwing an arm around Isabel's waist.

"Papa, dear papa, *must* we die?" exclaimed the young girl, endeavoring to nerve herself for the trial.

The men stood motionless, their lips compressed, their brown faces blanched. Toby Slivers fell upon his knees.

"Let us all ask help of God; let us all pray," he murmured, "that we may die like true Christians!"

"Hard down with that wheel!" roared the young captain.

So saying, he sprung to the helm, and, lending his Herculean strength to those who steered, contrived to put the wheel hard-a-port.

Still there was no perceptible change in the vessel's course. Less than twenty fathoms from the rocky point, she was still being drawn toward it, with unabated swiftness. The spray, flying up from the base of the cliff, was already sweeping into the shrouds, while an ominous grating noise was heard along her keel.

Tom, still hopeful, kept his eye upon the ship's head. He knew that she must answer her helm sooner or later, in spite of wind or current, but the question was, would she do so in time to avoid the terrible catastrophe which most of the crew seemed to think inevitable?

The grating sounds along the keel grew louder every moment; still nearer to the rocks flew the struggling craft; a wild cry—a howl of despair—burst from the lips of many of the men, who, clinging to ropes and belaying-pins, were expecting to hear the fearful crash, when, swift as a thunderbolt, the ship's head suddenly swung up! This just saved her from striking the point, round which she was now carried with the rapidity of a whirlwind, into the broad bay beyond! This bay was only partially sheltered from the storm. The great seas came rolling into it, crashing with the din of thunderbolts and careering far over the jagged rocks along shore. The current here was very strong, and drew the ship with inconceivable rapidity toward a dangerous reef parallel with the coast.

The salvation of the craft, therefore, depended upon her being held. Captain Tom at once gave orders to let go the

sheet-anchor, while, with his own hand, he threw the main-top-sail halliards off the pin.

Cheered by his confident voice and manner, the men promptly obeyed orders, and the rattling of the cable was heard as it began to run through the hawse-hole. Just then an appalling crash was heard, and down came the foretop-mast, falling forward over the bows, with much of the rigging attached to it. Part of this rigging getting foul of the anchor-flukes, and the other part becoming entangled with the sprit-sail yard, the ponderous mass of iron was suddenly checked in its descent.

Meanwhile there was the reef, less than a quarter of a mile distant, its black, weed-covered rocks rising gloomily through the white, flying spray.

There was no time to lose, and Captain Tom's voice rung sharply through the din.

"Lively, men, clear that anchor! Bear a hand—bear a hand, my lads!"

The seamen, however, shrugged their shoulders; not one could muster sufficient courage to venture over the bows in the midst of the boiling, bubbling cauldron of waters, pouring over them.

"I'll go," said Turk, proceeding to fasten a rope around his waist.

Captain Tom pushed him aside.

"I have heard you had a wife and children living," said he; "therefore *I*, who am a single man, without one living relative, had better go."

He had already sprung upon the bows, with a rope fastened around his breast, and he now swung himself upon the anchor, ax in hand, to clear away the rigging. One of the men, seizing a handspike, thrust the end into the hawse-hole, so as to keep the cable from running until the captain, after having made all clear, should return to the deck. His situation certainly was one of great peril. The seas were almost continually pouring over him, and so great was the strain upon the rope holding him, and the force with which it rubbed against the copper sheathing on the rail, that it soon flew asunder. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he could now keep himself from being washed away, by holding on to the rigging, which he was endeavoring to clear.

Meanwhile, with his disengaged hand, he plied his ax with such vigor that the mass of rigging had soon almost drifted away from the anchor. At this moment, however, the ship made several mad plunges, burying bows, windlass and fore hatches, so that Tom, for a while, was completely shrouded from view, among the gurgling, boiling mass of waters.

When next seen, his situation was discovered to be truly appalling. The rigging, no longer holding the anchor, had wound itself round and round his body, fastening him to the mass of iron as firmly as if he were in a vice.

He writhed and twisted himself in every direction, but all in vain; he fell back, exhausted with his struggles. The men endeavored to assist him, but his position was now such, and the seas sweeping over him were so violent, that no person could reach him.

Meanwhile, the ship was every moment drawing nearer to the dreaded reef, now less than forty fathoms distant. The captain, turning his head, saw the bleak rocks frowning through the white spray. He saw them distinctly, although his brain was dizzy from the nearly vertical position in which he lay, and the mad plunges of the ship.

Tossed up and down, blown like a mere chip, the groaning, struggling craft would occasionally seem to lift him far up into the black, flying rack of the storm, and then carry him away down into the hollows between the waves, making the blood rush to his head, and causing every nerve to thrill with a strange, sickly sensation. He was weak and faint; therefore he hurriedly issued what he believed would prove to be his last order to his men. The latter saw his lips move, and heard his voice, but, on account of the storm-din, were at first unable to understand what he said. Finally, as the ship was lifted high on the crest of a counter-sea, the sailors clinging to the bows heard their captain, who repeated his words.

"Let the anchor go, lads, and save the ship. Never mind me!"

The men could not bring themselves to obey such a command. Were they to let the anchor go, Tom, attached to it, must, of course, be carried with it to the bottom.

"Do you hear there?" repeated the young skipper. "Let the cable run, and save the ship, Isabel, and—"

The rest was drowned in the booming of the ocean, as the vessel plunged far down into the roaring abyss of waters. To Mr. Morton the last words of the young man were repeated by one of the officers, who came from forward, to see to the helm. Isabel, who stood clasped by her father's arms, no sooner heard them than her pale face became flushed and her eyes shone with resolution.

"No!" she exclaimed, "that shall not be! The captain must not be sacrificed on our account. Oh, is there no way to save that brave man?"

As she spoke a tremendous sea, striking the ship, hurled her forward swiftly as an arrow toward the reef, now less than twenty fathoms distant. A grinding crash was heard along her bottom, proclaiming that she had struck and passed over a sunken rock. The shock threw every man off his feet, the sailor holding the cable from running with the handspike being among the number. Thus freed, the iron links spun through the hawse-hole, and the ponderous sheet-anchor crashed into the sea! The vessel struck nearly at the same moment, upon one of the reef-rocks, the force of the concussion, however, being much modified by the anchor, which had found good holding-ground.

The timbers were heard, cracking open in many places as the craft went over upon her beam-ends, while the great seas dashing against her swept her decks fore and aft. With a great deal of trouble, the first mate contrived to lower the cutter, in the chocks to leeward. All hands (including Mr. Morton and Isabel) with the exception of three of the men, who had been washed overboard, and the unfortunate captain, entering the boat, left the doomed ship, just as she sheered off a few fathoms to leeward and plunged out of sight beneath the angry waters.

The tremendous seas, sweeping over the reef, saved the cutter's occupants. Caught by one of the huge shore-bound walls of water, the boat was lifted upon its crest and swept like a shot high up on the beach far beyond. The light vessel was dashed to pieces, but those in it were saved at the expense of a few bruised limbs.

The party entered a large hollow in a rock, beyond the reach of the seas, where Isabel, who was faint and nearly

senseless, was partially restored to strength by a few drops of brandy from a flask in Turk's pocket.

"The captain," she murmured, sadly—"the noble captain Oh, what has become of *him*?"

Old Turk turned his head aside.

"The brave lad died doing his duty nobly," he said, in a hoarse voice. "If he had allowed me to go, it would have been better, as I'm an old hulk not worth preserving."

Isabel uttered a sudden cry, and pointed toward the water just beyond the reef.

"A human hand!" she exclaimed. "See! it is lifted up, it beckons to us!"

All eyes were turned in the indicated direction, where, sure enough, the hand was plainly visible. The spray, dashing to one side, soon disclosed a face.

"The captain! it is the captain!" was echoed on all sides.

"Ay, ay," howled Turk, "it must be him! he's got clear of the anchor; but how is it he don't move? He's a good swimmer, besides which the seas a-coming in ought to bring him to us!"

"There's some mystery about this matter," said Mr. Morton. "Perhaps he has become wedged, has got fast in a rock under water, from which he can not extricate himself."

Turk threw off his jacket and shoes; then fastened the end of a coil of rope, which had been brought ashore in the boat, around his waist.

"I'll go and see what's the matter with the lad, shipmates. You must stand by to haul!"

So saying he plunged into the sea, and taking advantage of the suction force of a receding wall of water, he boldly struck out for the reef. As this was but fifteen fathoms from the beach, he reached it before another sea came rolling in, and clinging to it, waited for another chance. Soon this was afforded him, and with great exertion he finally reached the spot where the hand had been seen. Here, sure enough, he found Captain Tom, thoroughly exhausted and about to go under.

"Quick, my brave fellow," he gasped. "Make a dive and cut away the piece of rigging that holds one of my legs."

"A piece of riggin,' lad?"

"Ay, ay. When the anchor carried me under, the rigging that held me drifted loose, so that I managed to rise to the surface before I was quite suffocated. On striking out for the shore, however, I perceived that one of my legs was still held by some part of the rigging attached to the anchor. I have ever since been trying in vain to extricate myself from it."

Another huge sea now was rapidly approaching—there was not a moment to lose.

Accordingly pulling his sheath-knife from his belt, Turk dove, and soon finding the troublesome rope, severed it with one blow of his knife.

"All right!" he said, as he rose to the surface.

He had just time to clasp the captain in his arms, when the expected sea came thundering upon them, and whirled both men against the reef. Bruised and nearly senseless, they must have perished but for the timely exertions of their shipmates on shore.

Those who held the rope attached to Turk's waist, hauled the old seaman in, while the rest, plunging into the sea, caught a firm hold of the captain and contrived to pull him high up on the beach.

With the help of a little brandy, both men soon revived, when all hands crowded round the captain, cheering him.

"Thank you," said Tom, bowing. "But I'm sorry you didn't let go the sheet-anchor when I told you. You might then have saved the ship."

"Yes, at the expense of *your* life," said Mr. Morton. "We were not willing to do that."

Turk now jumped upon a rock.

"Shipmates," said he, "that sheet-anchor adventure of our young cap. ought to be remembered. Such, do you see, being the case, and considering the way the anchor hung to him, I prepose that we give him a name as is characterkisit, the name of SHEET-ANCHOR TOM!"

This proposal was greeted with cheers, and from that time the captain was always spoken of among seafaring men by the new name for which he had been so dangerously baptized.

### CHAPTER III.

#### SAIL, 'O ! AND ANOTHER WRECK.

THE castaways remained in the cave until the storm had subsided, on the following morning. They then erected temporary shelters, with shrubbery and moss, after which they went to work, dragging ashore such bales and boxes as were found floating clear of the wrecked craft. In this way, a quantity of biscuits and meat were obtained, together with several chests of clothing. No sign of the ship itself was visible, although Captain Tom, with his friend Turk, having prepared a rude raft, paddled out to the spot where the vessel had gone down. Both men were of the opinion that she had sunk in very deep water, that she had settled down into one of those underwater gulleys, of almost unfathomable extent, which are sometimes found in the vicinity of reefs.

Mr. Morton bore his loss bravely ; but it was evident that the hardships he had recently undergone had impaired his strength very much. Isabel watched him anxiously, and more than once she grew pale with anxiety as she noticed his drooping frame and hollow, feverish cheek.

Captain Tom did every thing in his power to make her and her parent comfortable, and felt more than a thousand times repaid for his trouble by the glances of gratitude that beamed upon him from her soft eyes.

"If I could only make her mine," the poor fellow would say mentally ; "but I'm afraid that can never be. I'd never dare to tell her I loved her."

Her presence, and the satisfaction of waiting upon her, made him very happy. There was another very happy man among the party. This was Toby Slivers, the naturalist, who, through all his recent perils, had contrived to save his valuable box and blue umbrella. Grubbing among hollows in the earth, tangled thickets and crevices in the rocks, Toby pursued his interesting investigations with pleasant freedom.

He discovered some very curious insects, among which was

a large, black spider, with a red spot upon its back and long, prickly legs. While showing this creature to his friends, the insect suddenly jumped out of the little box in which he had imprisoned it, and made straight for its captor. Knowing that it was poisonous, Toby fled ingloriously, during which, the insect made its escape in triumph.

On the third day after the wreck, long, rolling seas came thundering upon the beach. Toby was preparing for a ramble when suddenly he beheld a sight which at once excited his interest. A little fish, about the size of a cuttle, and almost as round as a ball, with a short, stubbed tail, and apparently but one eye, was washed high and dry upon the sand. Toby watched it a moment, transfixed with joyful astonishment.

"God is good," said he, "to bring this prize directly within my grasp."

He bounded toward it with a glad shout, and seized it, when it wriggled away from his clasp, and, in its frantic evolutions, went whirling off, apparently upon the tip of its tail, its one eye fixed upon its pursuer in a peculiarly sly manner. Toby made another spring for it—again it eluded him, still wriggling off toward the water. He could not hold it when he grasped it, owing to its being so slippery; so, dancing off triumphantly upon its tail, the little creature finally reached its native element. Determined to capture it, dead or alive, Toby sprung upon the raft, provided with hook, line and bait, which, with other useful articles, he always carried about him, and paddled after it—the fish remaining visible under the clear, blue water. Suddenly it disappeared, and the naturalist now used his hook and line. He fished for his prey for several hours before giving it up. By this time, the raft had drifted considerably beyond the reef, and he had set out on his return, when, around the rugged point of the cliff, he beheld a sail, about two leagues distant. He signaled it at once, by tying a handkerchief to the end of one of the paddles and waving it; then hastened shoreward to acquaint the party with the good news.

Isabel was overjoyed when informed of the discovery, and Captain Tom, at once mounting a high precipice, affording him a good view of the stranger, soon perceived that she was approaching.

Before nightfall, the whole party were aboard the vessel, which proved to be the Trumpet from Valparaiso, bound to New York. The castaways were kindly treated during the passage, which proved a short one, as the vessel was for a fortnight favored with fair winds. As the craft neared New York, Sheet-anchor Tom grew sad.

He would part from Isabel in the city, and perhaps never see her again. He thought much upon this matter, and finally concluded that he would tell her he loved her.

He therefore descended into the cabin, where she sat reading. She looked very lovely—enchanting, he thought—and his heart beat rapidly as he waited for her to look up, for he did not wish to interrupt her. Finally, she raised her eyes—those large, soft, expressive eyes, and looked at him kindly and calmly. Now, his heart beat still harder, and to save his life, he could not, just then, have uttered a word.

There he stood, coloring deeply, feeling abashed, almost overwhelmed at the very thought of what he had been about to do.

He bowed to her in a confused manner; then walked to a corner of the state-room, and taking down his quadrant, which, in reality, he had no use for now, as he was not aboard his own ship, he went on deck.

A few days later, the vessel reached New York, and Tom soon found himself ashore, with Mr. Morton and Isabel. The former cordially invited him to call and see them, whenever he was so inclined, and the young captain's heart thrilled when he noticed that the girl seconded the invitation with her beautiful eyes.

A week after, he presented himself at the ship-owner's residence. Isabel greeted him kindly, but he saw a shadow of sorrow in her eyes.

"Papa is very sick," she said. "Some speculations into which he entered largely, before sailing, have proved failures, and he has lost a great deal. He has worried himself into a brain fever."

"Ay, ay, now, but that's too bad," said Sheet-anchor Tom. "Can I do any thing to help him? I have a few thousands laid up in the bank, do you see, and, if it'll be of any use, why, just say the word, and he shall have it."

Isabel declined the offer with many thanks. Her father, she said, could not be persuaded to borrow a cent, as he was already largely in debt.

Not long after, Tom took his leave. The next day he met a ship-owner with whom he was quite well acquainted, who informed him that Mr. Morton had died that morning.

"His plate, furniture, every thing, in fact, must go to pay his debts. He has lost a fortune within the past two weeks -- has left his daughter nearly penniless."

This news filled Tom with dismay; his heart was very heavy on Isabel's account, and his eyes glared like a lion's, as he thought of the hungry creditors swarming round the young girl.

"One thing is certain, however," he reflected; "her many suitors will be on hand to help her in this hour of her need. Perhaps some one of them may now persuade her to marry him." And Tom breathed a deep sigh.

On the following morning he made his way toward the residence of the deceased ship-owner. As he approached, he saw several rough-looking men lugging the rich mahogany furniture down the steps, and piling it upon large wagons drawn up in front of the house.

He accosted one of them, asking him if Miss Morton intended to move.

The man laughed coarsely.

"I don't know any thing about *that*," said he. "My employers is Brown & Co., auctioneers. As Mr. Morton owed a large sum, you know if payment can't be had one way it must be had the other."

Another man now appeared on the top of the steps in front of the house, with a beautiful bird-cage, containing a little Canary songster. The bird looked much frightened, especially when its careless holder dropped the cage, causing it to roll down the steps.

"Oh, men, for heaven's sake, don't hurt my poor bird!" cried a pleading voice, and glancing up, Tom saw Isabel looking out of a window.

"Is it yours, Miss?" inquired the man, with a coarse leer "how long since?"

"Why, blast you, of course it's hers!" roared Sheet-anchor Tom.

So saying, he caught the carman by the throat, and pulled the cage from his hand.

"No—no; do not get yourself into a quarrel on my account, captain," cried Isabel. "Let the cage go. I believe they have a right to it, according to law."

"Ay, ay, but what *kind* of law?" cried Tom. "It isn't plain sailing, at all, do you see?" he added, dealing the man a tremendous blow between the eyes, as he rushed upon him to regain the cage.

Down came Isabel, white with alarm, throwing herself between the two men.

"For heaven's sake!" she gasped, "no quarreling here Captain—captain—I beg of you to let this man have the cage."

A couple of policemen now arrived upon the scene, and Tom was soon informed that, by law, the man had a right to the property.

The young sailor then drew forth his pocket-book, saying that he would *buy* the cage. The carman had no objection, provided his employers were willing, but he must ask their consent.

Mounting his cart, which was loaded, he then drove away, while Tom, by Isabel's invitation, entered the house. He was surprised to find no person within, except the men who were moving the furniture, and one distant female relative of the bereaved girl. Suitors, friends and all had deserted her on account of her poverty.

"Ay, ay, now, but this is too bad!" said Tom. "Easy, there, easy with that furniture," he added, addressing the two carmen, who were handling chairs and tables in such a manner as to disturb Isabel, who looked much fatigued.

He endeavored to soothe the girl with gentle words, but he was, as usual, so embarrassed by her presence that he was unable to say much.

He remained until the carmen—having nearly stripped the house from top to bottom—were gone, when he took his leave to return in the course of a few hours with the bird-cage, which he had purchased of the auctioneers, at a large discount. He put the article upon a chair by the young girl's side, and without waiting for a word of thanks, departed.

Mr. Morton's funeral took place the next day. The hearse was followed by only two carriages—one containing Isabel and her relative, the other occupied by Sheet-anchor Tom, his third mate, Bill Turk, and the naturalist, Toby Slivers, who lodged at one and the same hotel.

A week after the funeral, Isabel summoned her father's creditors. Then, with pale cheek and glittering eyes, she confronted them, her lithe, queenly form drawn up to its full height.

"Gentlemen," she said, "this house has been bequeathed to me. With the exception of fifty dollars it is all the property I have in the world. I intend selling the house, as soon as possible, when I shall be able to partially satisfy your claims. You must give me *time* to pay the rest."

There was a low murmur. The greater part of the audience expressed their satisfaction—their confidence that Miss Morton would eventually pay them up; after which all departed.

When, a week later, Isabel had fulfilled her promise, Captain Tom visited her, begging her to accept a loan of a few hundreds from him. She refused, with many thanks.

"I have still enough to pay my passage to Liverpool," she said. "I have a friend there who will, I doubt not, be glad to engage me to teach her children music and French. In fact, I promised some time ago, to pay her a visit."

"I'll be the captain of the craft that takes you to Liverpool," said Tom, joyfully.

Isabel looked up at him with glad surprise.

"What? Are you going in that direction?" she inquired. "What's the name of your ship?"

"I haven't got my ship yet," answered he, coloring with embarrassment.

It was for the sake of being near her that he intended getting a ship for Liverpool.

That very day, after taking leave of the girl, he applied to Mr. Marlow, a ship-owner, of a Liverpool line, and informed him that he wanted a vessel.

Marlow looked at the speaker steadily a moment, then lowered his eyes, and scraped the floor thoughtfully with one foot.

"Well, really, captain, I—well, the truth is, I dare not trust you!"

"What?" cried Sheet-anchor Tom, opening his eyes wide with astonishment.

"I have been informed," continued the ship-owner, "that it was through your—your—carelessness, to use no stronger term, that the Meteor was lost!"

"What do you mean, sir? Who told you that, and what do you hint at? Come, sir, please speak out like a man!"

"Well, then, I have had no particular informant; but the story has been going the rounds among *all* the owners, along our river-front, that you lost the Meteor either through carelessness or *drunkenness*!"

"It is false!" cried Tom. "What a lubberly report! I'd like to find out the author of it. I'll be bound he wasn't aboard, at the time. Any of my crew will tell you a far different story."

The owner shook his head.

"The crew of a captain, who is kind to them, will not always stick to truth about their commander."

"Ay, ay, but then—why, blast it, man! you do not doubt *my word*, do you?"

"To tell the truth, I do not; but then, you see, I must go by *report*. Were I, after what's been said about you, to put you in command of one of my vessels, it would bring me into bad repute, at once, and would injure my business. All the other owners will tell you the same thing."

Mortified and surprised at the strange turn of affairs, Tom made his way to several other offices, where he was received pretty much in the same manner as he had been on his first application.

As he hurried along in no very pleasant frame of mind, he chanced to glance up, when he beheld, standing near one of the piers and apparently watching him with quiet exultation, the late Mr. Morton's clerk, William Clyde. Instantly, although Tom was not at all of a suspicious nature, it flashed upon his mind that perhaps this man had spread the injurious reports which had caused him so much trouble. Anxious to find out, he approached Clyde, who, however, suddenly turning upon his heel, disappeared among the passing crowds near the pier.

Finally, reaching his hotel, the captain informed Turk of the unexpected result of his applications for a vessel.

The old tar was astonished.

"P'raps," said he, "that Toby Slivers, with his bugs and butterflies, is at the bottom of the matter. I always thought that chap would be givin' us trouble."

Toby was applied to, but he denied having said a word to any person about the wreck, except in praise of the captain's behavior.

On the next day, Sheet-anchor Tom received a note from Isabel, in which she requested him to inform her whether or not he had changed his intention of taking command of a Liverpool vessel. She went on to say that she would prefer being in a vessel under his command than in any other, but that, if he had changed his mind, she should take passage in the Flying Cloud, which would sail in a week.

Tom was in despair. He answered the note with his usual frankness, telling every thing. Having dispatched it, he fell into a fit of musing, from which he was only roused by a hard slap upon his shoulder. Looking up, he saw Toby, intent upon securing a curious little moth, which had alighted upon the captain's shoulder.

"Beg pardon," said Slivers, "for intruding, but the insect was in my room first, from which he flew to yours."

"Toby," inquired the young skipper, looking up, "do you intend to ship?"

"I shall have to, I think, as my funds are getting low."

"Well, then, you will not have me for a captain, next time, as you expected, for I can not get a ship."

"I am sorry," answered Toby; "but I *must* go to sea at once. I think I shall ship in that vessel in which, as Turk informs me, you said Miss Morton would take passage—the Flying Cloud. Turk thinks of going in the same craft."

A sudden thought seemed to strike the captain.

"Yes, I will do it," he muttered, when Toby was gone; "for the sake of being near *her*, I will ship in the Flying Cloud as foremast hand!"

On the next day he informed Turk of his intention.

"I wish I had known this sooner," said the old tar, "and I would have allowed you to go in my place. Yesterday two

men were wanted to make up the Flying Cloud's crew. Toby shipped since then—yesterday afternoon—and I shipped this morning."

"Well, now, fate seems against me, sure enough," says Tom.

Soon, however, his eyes lighted up; he suddenly seemed to regain his usual cheerfulness.

Six days later, the day before that appointed for the sailing of the Flying Cloud, which was already being cast loose from the pier, Toby and Turk knocked at the door of Tom's room, as they wished to bid him farewell.

There was no response—all was silent in the room. As the knock was repeated, a waiter passed.

"There is nobody there," said he. "The captain left the hotel last night."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; paid his bill and left."

Much surprised, the two men made their way to the ship, just in time to get aboard before she was cast loose.

The next morning she was towed down the bay, and soon after she passed through the Narrows, with a fair wind.

Isabel stood upon the quarter-deck, sadly watching the lessening shores, when she heard a light step at her side.

Looking up, she was much surprised to see her late parent's head clerk, Mr. Clyde. He took off his cap, bowing and smiling.

"This meeting is very unexpected!" exclaimed the young girl.

"Can you not imagine why I am here?" he inquired, in his gentlest tone.

"No, sir."

"I will inform you, then, that I have not deserted you, like the rest of your suitors. I could not support the idea of your trusting yourself to the wide ocean without friend or protector."

"You mistake, sir; I have a couple of friends aboard," as she motioned her head toward old Turk and Toby Sliv who were coiling up some rigging.

Mr. Clyde laughed.

"They could not help you much in case of necessity," he

said, "being under the command of a captain who, unless I'm much mistaken, is not over easy with his men."

He nodded as he spoke toward a short, square-shouldered man, with a very red face, eyes small and parrot-shaped, a fiery beard, and fists like the knots on an oak tree.

This person, Mr. Stubb, the skipper, was roaring out his orders like a mad bull to a group of men forward, dragging the cable with their chain-hooks.

"Yes," continued Clyde, "I am here to be near you in case you need protection. You are not angry with me?"

"No," she quietly answered. "On the contrary I thank you very much for your kind interest in my behalf."

"Oh, Isabel!" said he, lowering his tone, "I have never before dared to tell you that I love you; but now—now that you have lost so much—now that you are cast adrift upon a cold, heartless world—my feelings will no longer permit me to remain silent. I love you—love you as man seldom has loved—and ask you to give me the right of protecting you forever—the right of a husband."

Isabel was surprised—more than that, she was deeply touched.

Clyde's eyes, his manner, his voice—all proclaimed that he was in earnest. In fact, what better proof that he loved her for herself alone than his proposing to her, now that she was stripped of every cent of the wealth which had attracted so many of her suitors.

Still, she was convinced that she did not love the man. His nature was not strong enough to awaken in her the feelings he craved. She felt grateful to him for his kindness—felt sorry to inflict upon him the pain of a refusal—that was all.

Pale he stood, his eyes shining with eager, anxious gleam, as he waited for her reply.

This was not long delayed. She quietly withdrew her hand from his, and looked him calmly in the face.

"I would you had not spoken thus," she replied, "for I am grieved to say that I can never be your wife. I shall, however, always think of you as one of my truest friends."

"You mean to say you do not love me," he said, in a hoarse voice.

"Not as a wife should love a husband," she answered.

He turned very pale, clenched his teeth, and paced the deck several times. Then he returned to her side.

"For God's sake, Isabel, give me a better answer. Perhaps, after all, you may be mistaken."

She would now have pitied him, but for a certain fierce, angry light in his eyes, which at once roused the combativeness of her nature.

"No," she replied, quietly but decidedly, "I meant what I said."

"Coquette?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"You have led me on with false hopes!"

Her eyes flashed.

"You know better than that," she said. "You know that I have never given you any encouragement."

He changed his tactics. It would not do to make her angry.

"I did not mean a coquette, after all," he remarked. "It was not your fault. It was your fatal beauty—your sweet manners that led me on, without your knowledge."

"I am sorry," she replied, "but you can forget me. Men find it very easy to forget."

"I shall never forget *you*," he answered. "I shall bide my time, hoping that your feelings toward me may change."

She shook her head.

"You think so now," he said, "but you can not imagine what may happen to change you. At any rate, I have not yet given up all hope."

By this time the Flying Cloud had plunged her bows into the Atlantic. The pilot had taken his leave, and the ship was booming upon her way under every thing she could carry.

Captain Stubb walked his quarter-deck, rubbing his hat gleefully. He was a good-natured man when the wind was fair, and he could "crack on" as much canvas as he pleased. Suddenly, however, an ominous noise was heard aloft: a crash that made all hands look up. It was then discovered that a singular accident had taken place. The foretopmast studding-sail boom had broken short off in the middle, and the two parts were swinging about in a furious manner, striking the topsail and making great rents in the canvas.

"Let go those halliards!" roared Captain Stubb to Toby Slivers, who was nearest to them.

Then the naturalist, who, as already stated, was nothing of a sailor, was seen to whirl himself round and round in a puzzled fashion, unable to ascertain which was the proper rope.

"Why, blast your lubberly eyes!" thundered Stubb, and picking up an iron belaying-pin, he sent it straight at the head of poor Toby.

The latter dodged it, just as Turk sprung forward and let go the halliards. The wild evolutions of the studding-sail, however, caused the rope to kink so that it became jammed in the block.

The captain rushed forward like a madman. Slip—slap—ker-whish-sh-sh! boong! boong! There was the studding-sail still careering about the jagged edges of the boom, tearing as good canvas as was ever set.

Turk and several other men darted aloft and laid out upon the yard, but they were unable to reach the slatting sail, which, whirling about like a windmill, threatened to knock over any person who should approach within two feet of it.

Meanwhile, Stubb, below, was beating the rail with his fists, and howling like a famished wolf.

"Excuse me, sir," said Toby Slivers, approaching, "but could you not throw up a rope, lasso-fashion, and catch the sail as they catch wild horses?"

"Wild asses!" roared Stubb. "Why, blast you, man, why ain't *you* aloft, helping them on the yard?"

At this, away went Toby, darting up the shrouds faster—faster—and faster, in his zeal fairly mounting to the topgallant-yard.

Red with rage, the captain alternately shook his fist at the naturalist and howled to the men, who were vainly trying to secure the sail. The latter was doing great damage, for every time it slatted, the sharp, tearing sound of canvas was heard.

All at once the captain stopped beating the rail—stopped howling—and stood with mouth and eyes wide open, as a tall figure, suddenly bounding from the fore-castle, ran up the fore-rigging with the agility of a wild-cat. In one hand this person held a rope, at the end of which was a bowline hitch.

Running cut upon the fore yard, he climbed the leech c the topsail, half way, then threw the hitch over one of the parts of the slatting boom and drew it down toward him, thus in a single instant holding the sail stationary.

A murmur of admiration circulated through the vessel, for the crew had seldom witnessed such an expert feat of daring.

The kink in the block was now cleared by one of the men, enabling the adventurous climber to draw the sail clear of the topsail-yard. The next moment it was on deck, while he who had secured it stood by, apparently amused by the glances of surprise directed toward him. He was not one of the crew of the vessel—the captain was sure of that. At the same time he acknowledged to himself that he had never seen a more trimly-built man, or one whose whole bearing betokened such easy familiarity with the sea.

Turk and Slivers, descending to the deck, no sooner beheld him than their eyes lighted up; but before they could say a word, the new-comer gave them a significant glance.

“Who are you?” cried Stubb. “What are you doing here in my craft?”

“Tom Malcolm is my name,” answered the other, bowing, “and I’m glad to find myself in your ship.”

“But I didn’t ship ye, my man. Please bear that in mind. You’ve done me a good turn, though, and to tell the truth, I ain’t sorry to have you here, as it’s plain you are used to blue water.”

“I’m glad that we agree on that point,” answered Sheet-anchor Tom—for he it was—“and I’ll be frank with you and tell you that I could find no other way of getting off in your craft, than by stowing myself in your hold, before you cast loose from the pier.”

“But what motive had you for wanting to be aboard of my craft more than any other? Answer me that, my man.”

“Ay, ay, now, but you press me too hard—on my word you do,” answered Tom, “so I must decline answering that question.”

“It isn’t for mutiny you came, is it?” inquired Stubb, looking savage.

“It isn’t for mutiny,” answered Tom, as he brushed from his jacket a cobweb, brought from the hold.

"Because if it is," continued Stubb, "I'll—I'll have you to know you've got in the wrong craft, and I'll just throw you neck and heels into the sea!"

"That would be hard treatment—it would! indeed," said Tom, knocking the dust from his cap.

"My name is Stubb—you've heard of Captain Stubb, who never would take a word from any man?"

"I *have* heard of Stubb," replied Tom, wiping, with a piece of canvas, some spots from his boots.

"Are you willing to do your duty, my man?"

"Ay, ay, sir, perfectly; try me and see."

"That's the way to talk. You act your part right, and you'll find I'll act mine. First, though, tell me why you were so anxious to get aboard of my craft?"

"Because I liked her looks."

"That's only half an answer."

"I can say no more."

"What do *you* think of this matter?" inquired the captain of his first mate.

"The chap has the right stuff in him, and is worth his weight in gold," replied the first officer, who was an old man; "I've seen many a blue-water chap in my day."

"All right. I'll take him. He belongs to your watch."

So saying, the captain walked aft, where Isabel and Mr. Clyde had been interested spectators of what had passed.

The girl and her companion had both seen Sheet-anchor Tom at one and the same moment. Isabel had colored deeply, and Clyde had noticed her emotion. He had seen her watching the young sailor with glances of deep interest, and feelings of the bitterest rage and jealousy against Tom were added to his surprise at the latter's unexpected appearance. He drew the captain to one side.

"Did that new man ship in your vessel?" he inquired.

"No; he stowed himself away in my hold. He is a good sailor, but I can't imagine why he was so eager to get aboard *my* craft."

"Humph! I hope he means no harm," said Clyde, in a low, significant voice.

The captain started, and Clyde's eyes lighted with exultation. He perceived that the skipper was of a suspicious

nature, and believed, therefore, that it would be easy to carry out the base plan which he had formed against the young sailor.

"What do you mean, sir? Do you know the man?" inquired Stubb.

"Well, being connected, once, with a shipping concern, I have seen many sailors—this one among the number, and I'm sorry to say I've heard that he is of a quarrelsome nature. One captain informed me that he tried to mutiny aboard his vessel."

Stubb uttered an angry exclamation.

"Let him try any such game aboard this craft, and see what he will get. I shall keep an eye upon him."

"You had better; he'll bear watching."

"Here, you new chap there, forward, come aft here and coil up this main-brace!" shouted the captain, to Tom. "Lively, there, jump!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when Tom was aft, colling up the rope with unusual dexterity.

The captain could not hide his admiration.

"Ay, ay, my man, that's shipshape. Now get a hammer and knock the rust off that ring-bolt by the steerage hatch."

Such a task is generally given to a boy, or to some person inclined to shirk duty, and the captain expected that Tom would object, and thus give him (the captain) an opportunity to sound his (Tom's) temper, by using harsh words. To his surprise, however, the young sailor proceeded to the work imposed upon him, with the same alacrity as he had shown before.

"Why, that chap is every inch a sailor!" thought the skipper, "and I'm half a mind to believe my passenger was mistaken about there being mutiny in him."

While Tom was at work, Isabel came to his side.

"I am surprised," she said, in a low voice, "to see you here."

"Well, you see, Miss, I couldn't get a captain's or an officer's berth, and so—so—I hid myself in the hold, and am now foremast hand."

"Oh, Tom, why did you do so?"

"Why, now, if you ask me that," said Tom, coloring

deeply, "I must tell you the truth. It was so as to be in the same craft with your beautiful self."

Isabel blushed deeply.

"Please," continued Tom, "not to let captain Stubb know who I am. I wish to travel *incog.*, as I've already told Turk and Slivers."

"I am sorry that I am the cause of your exposing yourself to rough treatment. Captain Stubb, I've heard, is a hard man."

"There's no treatment I wouldn't submit to for the sake of being near you," stammered Tom. "But there's no need of my getting into trouble here. I've sailed, in my time, under worse men than Captain Stubb."

Perceiving that the latter was watching them, and fearing that her presence might make Tom neglect his work and thus excite the skipper's wrath, Isabel turned and walked aft.

Captain Stubb took off his cap and bowed to her.

"Beg pardon, Miss, but do you know that man?"

"I have seen him in papa's office," she replied. "He has proved himself a friend to us both."

Stubb opened his eyes wide.

"What kind of a man is he? Not quarrelsome, not mutinous, I hope?"

"No," answered the young girl, decidedly. Then she added, warmly, "He is one of the noblest sailors that ever walked a quarter-deck!"

"A quarter-deck? Why, Miss, begging your pardon, foremast hands don't walk quarter-decks."

Isabel perceived that she had made a great blunder—had come near betraying Tom.

"I meant to say *deck*," she said. "At any rate, you will find him to be a good man."

The captain left her, wondering at the discrepancy in the two accounts he had heard of Tom. Clyde had said he was quarrelsome and mutinous; Isabel had said exactly the contrary.

Meanwhile the young sailor worked away at the ring with great dexterity. After he had knocked the rust from it, he procured some ashes and polished it until it shone like silver.

"I never saw that fellow's like," said the skipper, when

Tom had gone forward, and he came to inspect the ring. "He does every thing shipshape. I don't know as I'll have reason to feel sorry for his stowing himself away in my hold."

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A DOUBLE TROUBLE.

As day after day passed, the officers all spoke highly of Tom's behavior. In fact, the skipper had come to the conclusion that Clyde was mistaken, and that Isabel was right, when circumstances took place which again roused his suspicions.

Every night a group of men were noticed by the officer of the watch, gathered forward of the windlass. These men conversed in low tones, but the moment the officer would come near them, they would stop talking and disperse. Among the group, the tall form of Sheet-anchor Tom was always conspicuous.

He seemed the most eager speaker among them, and by his gesticulations and confident manner seemed to incite them to the performance of some particular deed.

"What," reasoned the captain, "could this deed be except matiny?"

He knew that he had made himself odious to many of the men by his tyrannical behavior, and naturally concluded that they were anxious for revenge.

Clyde, to whom he confided his suspicions, did not fail to strengthen them by every art in his power. He longed to see Tom flogged or otherwise disgraced before Isabel.

"Look," he would often whisper to the captain, when Tom approached the quarter-deck under pretense of coiling a rope, but in reality to be near the fair passenger. "You can see that he is all the time trying to play eavesdropper—to find out if we suspect any thing."

Finally the officers reported that there was grumbling forward, and Clyde declared that he believed Tom was at the

bottom of it. The skipper took the alarm, and always slept with a couple of loaded guns near his berth. He ordered his officers to keep a sharp eye upon the young sailor's movements, and immediately report to him every suspicious circumstance.

Now the fact of Tom's associating so much with the group of black-browed men nightly gathered forward, certainly looked suspicious; but if the skipper or his officers could only have heard what was said by the supposed conspirators they would have changed their minds very much respecting *him*. The truth was that Tom had overheard some of his shipmates, one night, talking about retaliation upon the captain for his severe treatment of them. Their manner at once led him to suspect that they meditated mutiny; so, ever since, he had been using all his powers of persuasion to turn them from their purpose. This was the explanation of his eager manner, his gesticulations, etc., when seen among his evilly-disposed shipmates.

Of one fact Tom was ignorant—of there being a chest containing a large amount of specie stowed away in one corner of the captain's room. Somehow the plotters had heard of this money, and being unprincipled men, the chest and its valuable contents formed an important part in their speculations. They had contrived to suppress all mention of it in Tom's presence, knowing that he would otherwise at once see through their black designs.

One dark night in the middle watch, while the vessel was off the Azores, the captain was waked by stealthy footsteps approaching his door. His lock being out of order, he had secured the door by means of a stout iron bar. Soon he heard the sliding of this piece of iron, and knew that the intruder was endeavoring to force it back by means of some instrument thrust through the crevice from the outside.

He snatched one of his loaded guns from the wall, stealthily glided from his bunk, and suddenly striking a light with a match at hand, beheld the dark face of one of the foremast hands, who, having just opened the door, stood before him holding a long knife in his grasp.

The captain, shouting the alarm, took aim and fired, but his bullet passed over the head of the mutineer, who bent a

rapid retreat. The captain pursued, and though all was darkness, his hand soon came into contact with the back of a man's neck.

"I have you!" he exclaimed. "You won't escape me easily."

The other, whirling himself clear, caught the captain by the throat, and throwing himself upon him, bore him down at once.

A fierce struggle now ensued, during which the first and second mates appeared, armed with revolvers, and followed by the steward carrying a lantern. The light revealed the captain lying prostrate upon his back, and Sheet-anchor Tom holding him firmly.

"Ay, ay, now," cried the latter, starting as he recognized the skipper's face; "this is a queer mistake I've made, but it was all owing to the dark. I didn't dream it was the skipper I was struggling with."

The first mate pointed his revolver at the speaker's head, while the second officer and the steward glided behind him, and, seizing him unawares, slipped a pair of handcuffs over his wrists.

"Caught, you rascal!" cried the captain, springing to his feet. "I've had my eye on you, this long time."

Sheet-anchor Tom looked sorely troubled.

"A pretty scrape I've got myself into," he said, "and all for trying to follow up and secure that mutineer. I dare say you think *I'm* one of the mutineers," he added, addressing the captain.

"There's no disputing that!" cried the skipper, angrily. "You don't pretend to deny it?"

"Ay, ay, that I do!" answered Tom, "most decidedly."

"Captain—captain, I beg you will release your prisoner! He is innocent!" cried an anxious voice, at this juncture; and Isabel, pale with alarm, opened the door of an adjoining room.

The skipper shook his head. He said he would be glad to comply with any *other* request from Miss Morton, but that circumstances were too strong against Tom, to leave a doubt as to his being in league with the mutineers.

"I am sure you are mistaken," said Isabel. "I would stake

my life upon his innocence! He can explain his presence here, I doubt not."

As the speaker seemed anxious that he should at once explain, Tom proceeded to do so.

He stated that he had waked half an hour previous, while lying in his bunk, to see two men, provided with long knives, gliding into the fore hold. Suspecting mischief, he sprung from his bunk and followed them, determined, if possible, to prevent foul play. Soon he lost sight of them in the dark, but suspecting that they had made their way into the cabin, he descended the companion-way. As he did so he heard a gun go off and caught a glimpse of a figure rushing past him, up the steps. Before he could seize it, he was grasped from behind by some person whom he supposed to be one of the mutineers, but who, as had just been proved, was the captain.

"A good yarn," said the skipper, "but I doubt the truth of it."

So saying, he ordered Tom to be thrust into the run.

As the hatch was fastened above him, Clyde entered the cabin, looking triumphant.

"I told you so," he whispered to the captain. "If I were you I would make an example of him."

Soon after, the mutineer at whom the skipper had fired, and whom he had recognized in the momentary light of his match, was brought aft, and also thrust into the run.

"The rascals entered the cabin," said Stubb, "by displacing a board from the bulkheads that separate us from the steerage. I'll see that they are made more strong to-morrow."

Early the next morning, all hands were called aft.

"Men," said the captain, when they were ranged in line on the lee side of the quarter-deck, "you know by this time that a rascally attempt at mutiny was made last night. Well, if there are any among you who feel inclined to renew the attempt, I may as well tell you that you had better give it up. I shall make of the two who were caught, an example which you may long remember."

So saying he made a motion to the steward, who, descending into the cabin, soon appeared with the handcuffed prisoners.

"If you have any thing to say for yourselves, say it now," remarked the captain, addressing the two men.

Both remained silent. Tom's cheek was red with anger, and his eyes flashed. The other man looked dark and sullen.

Old Turk stepped forth, and scraping the deck with his right foot, confronted the skipper.

"Beggin' your pardon, sir, I can stake my life that Tom had no hand in this business."

"To your place!" roared the captain. "What do you know about it?"

"Go back, Turk," said Tom, decidedly. "Don't get yourself into trouble on my account."

The old man obeyed; but there was a glare in his eyes which threatened interference when matters should come to a point.

At that moment Isabel came on deck. At sight of the preparations that were going on, her cheek paled and her eyes flashed. She at once comprehended that the captain intended to seize (fasten) Tom in the rigging, and flay him with the cat-o'-nine-tails.

"It's too bad," said Clyde, coming to her side and speaking with pretended sympathy. "I never thought it would come to this."

"It shall not," she firmly answered.

Then she walked straight up to the skipper and looked him full in the face.

"You have no right to punish this man," she said, firmly; "he is innocent."

"Really, ma'am," answered Stubb, "I must differ with you."

"Flogging is against the law," she replied. "You have no right to take the law into your own hands."

The captain colored and bowed awkwardly.

"I know my duty," he said, "and must do something to prevent my officers and passengers from being murdered."

So saying, he motioned to his mates, who at once proceeded to take off Tom's handcuffs and strip him of his shirt.

The young man said not a word, but his lips were compressed with determination.

His upper garment was hardly off when, suddenly striking out right and left, knocking aside the two mates, he bounded to the rail and sprung overboard. He was an expert swimmer, and at once struck out for the shore, half a league distant.

"Clear away the quarter-boat!" thundered Stubb.

The boat was soon in the water, gaining rapidly upon the swimmer.

"Pull—pull, you rascals," growled the captain, who stood up in the stern-sheets of the boat; "one more stroke and we have him."

As he spoke, Tom dove, and passing under the boat, came up far astern. Stubb, however, whirling the light craft quickly round, soon overtook him. He was seized, hauled into the boat, handcuffed, and brought back to the ship.

Isabel, who had noted every thing, again interfered.

"It's no use, Miss Morton," said Tom. "You can't do me any good, though I'm much obliged to you, all the same. It's hard for an honest man to be flogged, but I can bear it after a fashion, as long as I know *you* do not believe me guilty."

"Humph!" muttered Clyde, who stood not far off. "What miserable affectation of innocence."

Tom, who was quick of hearing, heard the remark.

"See here!" he exclaimed, turning suddenly toward the clerk, "I'm not suspicious, by any means, but, unless I'm much mistaken, you, sir, are the cause of all my trouble."

"I will not be insulted, in this manner, by a vagabond," said Clyde. "Captain, will you permit your passengers to be treated thus by a criminal aboard your vessel?"

"Away with him, back into the run!" said the skipper, addressing his mates. "Put the other criminal there, also!"

The truth was, the captain, who was somewhat abashed by the indignation Isabel had shown at his treatment of Tom, concluded that it was best to put off the flogging until midnight, when he might perform his work without any witnesses besides the seamen.

Isabel, who believed that he had decided to forego his brutal intentions, seemed much relieved. Clyde, on the contrary, frowned and bit his lips, for, as mentioned, his principal motive for wishing Tom to be flogged was to see him disgraced before the young girl.

The captain did not mention his intentions to any person. When midnight came, he stepped on deck and ordered the officer of the watch to turn up all hands without noise. He was promptly obeyed, and the men came aft, to find Tom and the mutineer there, surrounded by the mates who had stealthily brought up the prisoners.

"Now, then, to your work," said the captain, in a low voice, as lanterns were hung up in the mizzen-rigging. "This man first!" pointing at Tom.

The young man's handcuffs were taken off, and his wrists were seized to be tied to the rigging. He pulled them away, and, quick as lightning, whirled himself around, facing his persecutors. Instantly, one of the mates pointed a loaded revolver at his head.

"Better stay where you are. One step and you drop!"

"Ay, ay; but you may as well fire off your pistol, now you've been at the trouble of loading it!" cried Tom, as he bounded from the group.

The officer did not fire; but his brother mates threw themselves upon the young man and brought him back.

"Mercy is a good thing in its place," said Tom, speaking to the man with the revolver; "but I would rather you had fired, as I should have preferred being shot to being flogged."

"Come—away with him and tie him up!" cried the captain, as a low murmur of approval circulated among the men.

Tom now was hurried to the mizzen-rigging; but, as his wrists were being tied, he jerked them away, and turning, again confronted the mates.

"If I *must* be flogged," said he, "let it be like an honest man, fair and square upon my breast!"

At this, the crew cheered, and drew near to the mizzen-rigging. The captain turned pale with alarm.

"Quick, do your work!" he said to his mates.

Accordingly, they were proceeding to secure the prisoner to the rigging, when the voice of Turk was heard.

"What say you, men, will you permit it?"

The captain glared at the speaker and turned very pale as cries of "No—no!" resounded along the line.

"Mutiny!" he shouted. "Steward! steward! the musket!"

The cries grew louder: the men drew nearer.

"Shipmates!" cried Tom, "keep back! Don't get yourselves into trouble for me!"

The men, however, now were half mad with excitement. One of them wrenched the mate's revolver from his grasp before he could fire.

"No flogging here!" cried several; "cut down the two men!"

The captain and mates found themselves surrounded by twenty stout fellows.

Two of these seized the captain, and throwing him down, one drew a knife to cut his throat.

"Hold!" cried Turk, "no murder in this craft!"

The two men heeded him not. The edge of the keen steel already touched the skipper's throat, when the voice of Sheet-anchor Tom was heard ringing through the ship.

"Avast, there, mates, what are you about? As sure as there is a God above us this ship goes to the bottom the moment there is a murder committed aboard of her!"

The voice, the manner, more than the mere words, startled and awed the mutineers. Tom knew well how to operate upon the superstitious fears of sailors. The worst of the mutineers being the most ignorant, were, as a natural consequence, the most affected by this speech.

The man with the knife drew back and permitted the skipper to rise. At the same moment several of the men cut the lashings that held Tom to the rigging.

"We will take the ship!" exclaimed one of the crew.

Half a dozen of his shipmates echoed the cry: the rest looked at Tom, as if waiting for his decision upon the matter.

"No," he exclaimed, "that must not be. All we want is justice. If the captain and his officers will agree to treat us like men we will return to duty."

"Ay, ay, they must promise *that*," exclaimed several.

"Very well, I promise," said Stubb, "for myself and officers."

Soon, it was evident that he said this simply to gain time. Moving quickly among those men who had wished to take the ship, he said a few words to them in a low voice, when, to the surprise of their shipmates, the would-be mutineers, arming themselves with handspikes, crowbars and other

implements, ranged themselves on the side of the captain and his officers!

The truth was that the skipper, who understood the sordid natures of these wretches thoroughly, had persuaded them to join him by promising a reward in gold. His party now numbered fourteen, while there were but seven of the others.

"Knock 'em down! capture 'em—capture all the rascals!" roared Stubb, his eyes glaring with exultation.

Upon the seven men the larger party now prepared to rush, yelling like tigers.

The smaller gang were ranging themselves by the side of Sheet-anchor Tom, when the young sailor suddenly was knocked senseless by a blow from behind with a hand-spike.

He who dealt this cowardly stroke then ran aft and descended into the cabin; not, however, before the man at the wheel had recognized him as the passenger, William Clyde.

Isabel, hearing the disturbance on deck, had dressed herself and come into the state-room.

"What is the matter?" she inquired, much alarmed.

"Don't disturb yourself," said Clyde, "it is nothing. The captain is only putting down some of the men who wished to take the ship."

He had no sooner spoken than the skipper was heard, roaring out to the steward to bring up a whole string of handcuffs.

Clyde then returned to the deck to find two of the seven men, besides Tom, lying senseless, and the rest surrounded and held in the grasp of the captain's party. The steward brought the handcuffs, and the three prostrate men recovering their senses, the whole seven were thrust into the run.

The skipper then distributed the reward, when the traitors walked forward, cheering him.

Their zeal was not of long duration. Early next morning a furious gale pounced upon the ship, driving her straight toward the high cliffs of one of the Azores. By bracing the yards, the rocks might have been avoided; but the men refused to obey orders unless the captain gave them some more money. The danger being imminent, they hoped in this way to extract funds from him.

The captain assured them that he had no more money, when they spoke of the chest in the cabin.

"That is not mine," he said; "it belongs to a Liverpool firm."

He grew pale as he noticed their greedy looks. They could easily overpower him and his officers if so disposed. He consulted with his mate, who convinced him that all the men in the run should be set free. There was no other way to save the ship.

"The fact is," continued the mate, "we have been obliged to put the *best* men in the run. Things were worked round in a queer fashion."

Stubb owned that they were, and concluded that he would set the prisoners free, as it was his only resource to save his craft.

Accordingly the seven were liberated, and informed that if they would turn to and do their duty, there would be no more trouble. He even went so far as to own to Sheet-anchor Tom that he had mistaken his character, and now felt sure, from his late conduct, that he had not been in league with those who wished to mutiny.

"All right," answered Tom. "I'm willing to do my duty as long as I'm treated well."

The liberated men braced the yards just in time, the vessel barely escaping the edge of the rocky island. Ahead, however, there was a reef still to be passed, and it seemed doubtful if the ship could lay up close enough to clear it.

White with alarm, Isabel peered through the companion-way.

"Do you think we can clear it?" inquired Clyde, of the captain.

"God only knows," he replied. "Luff, luff, there at the wheel!"

The man endeavored to obey, but the power of the seas prevented his moving the helm.

"We are lost!" muttered the mate.

At that moment a tall figure bounded past him. It was Sheet-anchor Tom, who, now confronting the captain, offered to save the ship, if permitted to take the helm.

"Very well, my man; but no human power can save the ship now!"

Tom then sprang to the helm, and to the surprise of all, put it "*hard up*" instead of "*hard-down*."

The first consequence of this maneuver was the falling off of the ship, so that she drove straight for the *center* of the line of reef-rocks!

A cry of dismay sounded from every lip except Turk's. The old sailor swung himself up on the rail by the main shrouds, and stood looking ahead with more curiosity than fear. As to the captain, he darted aft, his whole face convulsed with anger and astonishment.

"Good God, man! Look out! look out! What are you doing?"

Tom answered not a word, but quietly pointed ahead, at the same time meeting the craft by putting his wheel down a little, so as to keep her steady.

All eyes being turned toward the reef, Tom's intention was made apparent. He had put up the helm in order to direct the ship into a strong current running parallel with the line of rocks, and *commencing near the center*! Caught by this current, the ship was now whirled rapidly along past the reef and round that end of it opposite to the one which the captain had intended to weather.

In a word, Tom's daring feat—one which many good seamen might have hesitated to perform—saved the craft.

All hands cheered; and came crowding round their preserver, shaking hands with him.

"You have saved my ship," said Stubb, "you, who, I thought, had plotted to take it from me. I'll keep my weather-eye open hereafter, and be careful how I condemn a man."

Isabel, smiling and blushing with pleasure, also came to thank Tom. She felt very glad that he had reinstated himself in the good opinion of the officers. There would be no more trouble for him, she was sure.

## CHAPTER V.

## OFF AGAIN.

A FORTNIGHT after the incident last described, the Flying Cloud arrived at her destined port. Soon a boat was lowered to take the passengers ashore. Tom stood looking rather sad and downcast for him, when Isabel came to bid him good by. She gave him her hand, and as he clasped it he trembled all over.

"Farewell, my best of friends," she said.

"Isabel," he stammered, and his eyes grew moist in spite of him, "I—"

He had intended to tell her, there and then, how much he loved her. The quarter-deck was deserted by all except these two, and he believed he would never have another chance to say what he wished. But the large, soft eyes were again upon him, and his courage gave way. He helped her into the boat; then stood watching it until it was out of sight, believing that he should never see its fair occupant again.

A few days later he and Turk received their discharge, and with Toby Slivers, the naturalist, took up their quarters in the —— Hotel. Meanwhile Clyde, having been decidedly rejected a second time by Isabel, resolved to return to America. His love for the young girl was now turned to the bitterest hate. He was a man who always hated those who did not comply with his wishes.

The eldest daughter of the friend with whom Isabel was staying, married soon after Miss Morton's arrival. She was a dark, suspicious, jealous girl, and felt uneasy whenever she looked at beautiful Isabel. Her husband, she thought, could not help seeing the contrast between her and the beautiful American. The result of this feeling was, that Isabel had not long remained at her new quarters, when she was informed that the whole family were sorry to part with her, but that they must do so, as they were going to make a tour on the continent.

So Isabel packed up her slender stock, and left, not knowing now where she should next lay her head. Her funds were very low, so that she must look up some very cheap lodging-house. She saw several, but they were of such forbidding aspect that she passed on.

Twilight was approaching, the wind blew cold, and the dust, sweeping into her face, almost blinded her.

Night closed around her, and not having yet found a lodging place, she lost her way. She became quite alarmed, when she noticed on the opposite side of a lonely street, the tall figure of a man, who seemed watching her. She hurried along, when the man, crossing, approached her, respectfully lifting his hat.

Then she recognized Sheet-anchor Tom.

"Ay, ay, Miss Morton, I'm glad to see you—I am indeed!" he said, coloring in the bashful way usual to him when speaking to her.

She shook hands with him cordially, and expressed the sincere joy she felt at meeting him.

"I have often thought of you," she said, frankly; "and always with feelings of the deepest gratitude, for the kindness you have shown me."

"Thought of *me*!" he exclaimed, gladly. "Now that makes me very happy—it does indeed, Miss Morton!"

He spoke so fervently that she was a little frightened, and hastened to change the subject, informing him what she was looking for, and that she had lost her way.

"If you will come with me," said Tom, quite joyful at the idea of rendering her a service, "I will show you a snug little place which, I doubt not, you will like."

She complied with his request, and he soon conducted her to a small, neat brick tenement lodging-house, kept by an old lady with whom he was slightly acquainted. Isabel was shown to a comfortably-furnished apartment.

"Do you wish to hire by the month or the quarter?" inquired the old lady, after she had named the price.

"I don't know as I shall remain here a *month*," she answered, knowing that her money would scarcely, with the most rigid economy, hold out that length of time, unless she were able to procure employment.

The old lady followed Sheet-anchor Tom to the door.

"Now, then, be careful of her, for she is used to the best," said the young sailor, as he slipped a ten-pound note into her hand. "See that every thing is well cooked, and sent up at the right time. Let her have a chicken, do you see, several times a week, and when the money is gone, why just let me know, but don't say a word about *my* giving you the funds."

The old lady promised compliance, and Tom left.

Isabel was surprised the next morning at the rather costly-looking breakfast sent up to her.

"Indeed," she said to the old lady, "I don't think I should have ordered quite such an expensive meal."

"You won't find it very expensive, after all," answered the good dame; "not so much so as you think."

Every day Isabel was surprised by the excellence of the meals at the dame's lodging-house. She requested the old lady to let her know if she heard of any chance for a governess or for copying. The woman reported her wishes to Tom, when she next saw him. A few days later, the young sailor sent up a request to Isabel to see her. She readily complied, when, putting a roll of manuscript upon the table, he informed her that he had obtained copying for her to do, at so much per page.

The truth was that Tom had procured, for a small consideration, a whole chestfull of waste law manuscripts, enough to last Isabel for a year. He had resolved to use a few hundreds of his own money to pay her so much a week for copying the papers, while pretending—it was the first deception Tom had ever practiced in his life—that he had obtained the work from a lawyer.

Isabel was delighted with the work, especially as the salary—a magnificent one for copying—would enable her to pay her board, and have a few dollars to spare.

Soon after conveying the manuscripts to Isabel, Tom saw his friend Turk, who was now employed upon a Liverpool coal-schooner.

"Turk," said he, "I am going away."

"Ay, ay, sir—I'm off with you, of course."

"No; you must stay here as paying-clerk."

"As what?" inquired Turk.

Tom explained about the manuscripts, and made the old sailor understand that he wanted to intrust him with a certain sum of money out of which he might pay Isabel her weekly wages for copying, during his (Tom's) absence.

"I shall not be gone longer than seven months," said the young man. "I am going to the place where the Meteor was wrecked, and endeavor to fish up the jewels aboard, which you know were very valuable—worth many thousands of dollars!"

Turk doubled his fists and brought them down upon the table in front of him with great force.

"Ay, ay!" he exclaimed, "that'll be a haul worth trying for. It would do my old heart good to see the poor girl git that treasure."

"I'll get it for her if I die in the attempt," answered Tom. "Night and day, the poor thing worries herself because she has not yet been able to save a cent toward paying her father's debts."

"I will help you!" cried Turk, "all I can. I will stay and carry out for you that plan of payin' her the weekly salary. She is a good gal, and desarves it."

The two men parted, Turk going toward the docks, and Tom to seek a vessel for the intended expedition.

The old sailor had not proceeded far when he met Clyde, who held out his hand. Turk did not grasp it very cordially, as he had always felt for the clerk a strong feeling of dislike.

"How is your friend?" inquired Clyde. "Sheet-anchor Tom?"

"Well," answered Turk, dryly.

"Does he intend to sink any more ships?" inquired the other, smiling.

"What do you mean?" queried Turk, angrily.

"Oh, well, you know there was the Meteor. He sunk her, and—"

"You must be a perfect lubber, Mr. Clyde, to say that. The Meteor's sinking wasn't Tom's fault. Besides, he's going to fish up the vallebles that was in her, do you see, and give 'em to Miss Isabel."

"Umph! A good idea—a very good idea," muttered Clyde. "When is he going to start?"

"Don't know ; pretty soon I think, as he's looking up a craft now."

Clyde then bade the old man a hurried farewell and left him. He had made up his mind in an instant that Isabel should never get the jewels in the sunken ship. She had, by refusing him, excited his hate, and now he was determined, if possible, to thwart the benevolent intentions of Sheet-anchor Tom. He knew that, at that period, the fruitful, pleasant shores of Brazil were infested by bands of lawless men, calling themselves beach-combers—deserters from vessels—who would scarcely hesitate at any crime promising rich pecuniary profits. Clyde, therefore, resolved to take passage as soon as possible, for Rio Janeiro, thence make his way to the coast off which the Meteor was wrecked, and engage the services of some of the beach-combers, who, he doubted not, could obtain the chest of jewels before Tom's arrival, thus defrauding the rightful owner. Clyde would then give the workmen a large share of the treasure for payment, and reserve the "lion's portion" for himself.

Entering a shipping-office, he ascertained that no vessel would be ready for Rio Janeiro in less than three weeks from that time.

This irritated him ; Tom, perhaps, would obtain a craft before this period, and thus get ahead of the schemer. In fact, the young sailor had already found a ship—the Dolphin—which, with a little repairing, would answer his purpose. The owner gave him every facility to prosecute his work, so that he hoped to be ready for sailing in a fortnight.

One night, just after the workmen employed had quitted the vessel for the day, he was seated in the cabin smoking a cigar, when a peculiar smell, as of something burning, saluted his nostrils. He rose quickly, and snatching up a lantern passed into the steerage, where he at once perceived a thick smoke. A crackling noise was soon heard, and glancing toward a corner, he discovered that a large bunch of oakum there was in flames. Not far from this there were several barrels of tar and coils of tarred rope. If these were ignited there would be but little hope of saving the vessel.

Tom, believing himself the only man in the ship, hurried on deck and procured a large bucket of water and a roll of

canvas. Wetting the latter, he threw it over the flames, and soon extinguished them. At the same moment, however, he saw tongues of flame shooting up from the *fore-hold*!

This circumstance at once excited his suspicions, and he darted forward in time to get a glimpse of the outline of a man's figure scrambling from the hold.

Quickly extinguishing the fire with the canvas, he hurried in pursuit of the fugitive, who, now springing upon the rail, leaped to the dock and made off. Tom pursued but soon lost sight of the criminal, who disappeared among the black shadows of the crooked streets.

Wondering who the incendiary could be, and what his reasons were for setting fire to the ship, Tom returned. The more he reflected upon what had just happened, the more he was puzzled. Certainly, the man must have been insane, an escaped lunatic, he thought, to make such an attempt. On the next day he spoke about it to the owner, who shook his head significantly.

"Depend upon it," said he, "the incendiary was one of my enemies; for, like most all business-men, I *have* enemies, sir, who would not hesitate to kill me if they dared. I shall try to probe this matter and find out the guilty party, though I doubt if I shall succeed."

A week later the Dolphin was ready for sea. Tom had shipped a good crew, and resolved to take with him Toby, the naturalist, who could make himself useful in the cabin.

On the day fixed for sailing, the young sailor repaired to Isabel's lodging to bid her farewell. She was busy with her manuscripts at the time, but she received him with cordiality.

"I am going away," said Tom. "My ship sails in a few hours. Good-by, Miss Morton."

His voice was a little husky and he twirled his cap uneasily as he spoke.

"Will you be gone long?" inquired Isabel.

"Not a year, I think; though I won't be certain."

Then he informed her of the arrangement he had made with Turk to pay her her weekly salary.

"You need not have taken so much trouble," she replied. "Were you to inform me of the name and place of business of the lawyer, I could call upon him myself."

Tom colored and was much embarrassed.

"He—he—lives a long ways off," he stammered. "Ay ay, so far off that it would tire you to death to get to him."

"I am sure you are very—very kind, to take so much pains for me," she said.

"It isn't pains at all," answered Tom; "it's only pleasure, do you see? What *wouldn't* I do for you, Miss?" he added, giving his cap a long twirl.

He also looked at her shyly, but with such a flash of powerful love in his eyes that Isabel's drooped.

Both were silent for several minutes, when Tom, bashful as he felt, was the first to break silence.

"Good-by," he repeated, "and may God bless you and take care of you, Miss, while I'm gone."

She gave him her hand, and he felt it tremble in his grasp. He looked at her and perceived that her eyes were lowered, her cheeks quite pale. Her manner was calculated to inspire him with more self-possession than he had ever yet felt in her presence, and his heart grew courageous. He would tell her that he loved her, and learn his fate before he sailed.

"Isabel—Miss Morton," he said, "I am going away; but, before I go, I wish to tell you that I am sorry—ay, ay, mighty sorry, to leave one whom I love more than—"

The large, soft eyes were lifted to his face. They looked at him calmly and earnestly, and the words he had wished to say died upon his lips.

"You need not be afraid to name her to me," said Isabel, with an encouraging smile. "I will not betray your secret."

"She does not even guess who I mean," thought Tom, sorrowfully. "So it's pretty certain what her *answer* would be if I told her."

"Ay, ay," he said aloud. "I know you wouldn't, but—but—do you see, I've changed my mind about saying what I was going to."

"Oh, very well," she answered.

They shook hands, he said good-by, and had nearly reached the door, when upon the floor he saw a ribbon which had dropped from her hair.

He picked it up, and involuntarily pressed it to his lips.

Isabel colored deeply, while Tom felt so much confused at.

what he had done that for several minutes he was unable to speak a word.

At last he gave her the ribbon.

"Here," said he, "take it, and pardon me for what I did. My only excuse is that I couldn't help it. Take the ribbon, unless you are willing to make me a present of it to carry off with me to sea."

"Certainly; you may keep it if you wish," she replied.

"Ay, ay, that's kind of you," he said, as he carefully put the piece of silk in an inside pocket—"and now I will go."

"Will you not say what you intended?" she inquired. "You must know," she added, smiling, "that when you commence a speech, I have a right to hear the end of it."

"So you have," replied Tom, "but—but—do you see, I—"

"Nay, I will hear no denial," she said, blushing.

She looked at him with those earnest eyes, and Tom could not say a word. He again twirled his cap in confusion.

"Good-by, Miss Morton," he finally said, "and many—many thanks for that little ribbon."

The next moment he was gone.

He repaired directly to his ship, aboard which he found Turk, waiting to bid him farewell. The two friends soon parted, the anchor was lifted, and the ship, catching the land-breeze, as her topsails were sheeted, bowled merrily upon her course.

In due time she arrived at Rio Janeiro, where her captain remained, laying off and on a few days to procure a stock of fresh water. He then stood along the coast, and soon arrived at the bay in which the Meteor was sunk. He had made a careful drawing of the place, soon after the wreck, and had also taken its latitude and longitude, so that he experienced no difficulty in finding it.

Sounding for the wreck, he soon felt it and anchored near it. The undercurrent had carried it along toward the shore; but the water was deep enough for his craft. Accordingly he got up tackles at once, and went to work. Two or three good divers whom he had shipped, plunged into the clear depths, and were soon on the wreck. They were obliged to dive three or four times before ascertaining that the chest of jewels was not in its former place.

"Are you sure, lads?" inquired Tom, "are you sure that you looked in the after-part of the east room?"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response.

Tom began to fear that others had been before him in securing the treasure. Toby Slivers, however, thought that the chest was still in the wreck, but that the water had swept it into some other part of the craft.

About the time that Tom was searching for the sunken jewels, Clyde arrived, in a Liverpool steamer, at Rio Janeiro.

On the next day he took passage in a little Portuguese schooner, bound along the coast, and landed within twenty miles of the spot where Tom's ship was anchored. Ahead of him, among groves of gigantic trees, where the grass was long and green, and curious birds chattered and screamed the live-long day, there were many rudely-constructed huts, near which stalwart men were seen lounging upon the sward, smoking their pipes. Clyde walked toward them, and seating himself by a gruff, gigantic fellow of middle age, whom he had heard addressed by the name of Jim Jones, remarked that it was a pleasant day.

"It's always pleasant in these parts, except when there's tornadoes," answered the other, gruffly.

Then he scrutinized the young man from head to foot.

"How came *you* here?" he inquired, "and what may you want? Have you any money?"

"I have no money, my friend, but I know a way to make plenty."

The other's eyes glistened.

"How?"

In a few words Clyde explained about the wreck of the Meteor, and went on to speak about the chest of jewels.

"And you think I can fish 'em up before the rightful owner comes after 'em?" inquired the man.

"Yes, by a little hard work."

"Then I'm not your man," answered the other, curling his lip. "We get plenty to eat and drink here without working hard for it. the jewels are not worth the trouble it would take to get 'em."

Clyde, who had thought that the man would jump at his proposal, moved away disappointed, and spoke to others

on the subject. He consulted the whole gang—twenty men in all—but could find no one willing to undertake the job. These men were the laziest fellows he had ever met with. He stood motionless, hesitating as to what he should do next, when the man whom he had first addressed called to him.

“I tell ye what,” said the beach-comber, “the rightful owner is already a-fishing for the jewels, if it was his craft I saw in the bay below here, two days ago.”

“What was the vessel’s name?” asked Clyde.

Being informed, he knew at once that Tom had arrived. He fairly ground his teeth with bitter disappointment.

“By the way, how much might them jewels be worth?” inquired the man.

“About one hundred thousand dollars!”

“What?” and the beach-comber sprung to his feet, shouting, “A prize, men—a prize of one hundred thousand dollars!”

“Ay, with hard work,” was the sullen response.

“No, no, we won’t have to work at all!” cried the giant, “except perhaps in the way of a little fighting.”

And the beach-comber drew a long sheath-knife from his belt, and flourished it round his head.

“Yes, men,” he continued, “we will wait until the captain of the ship gets up the jewels, and then—”

His raised eye-brows and the glance he directed from under them, were significant to all.

Clyde was exultant; at the same time, being a poor man, he was anxious to pocket his share of the prize.

“You shall have two-thirds of the profits to divide among you,” he said, “and I will take the rest.”

At this there was a coarse burst of laughter, and Clyde felt sure that there was no hope of his obtaining a single jewel when once the chest was in the possession of the gang of beach-combers.

“Why, you young lubber!” cried the first speaker, “just you walk yourself off, as soon as you can, unless you choose to help us in the attack, when of course we’ll let you have some little trifle for your pains.”

“I will help you,” answered Clyde.

“Well, now, you are good grit, at any rate,” said the beach-comber, “and we’ll be glad to have you with us, as we are

short-handed. We do not number more than twenty, while the crew of the ship must equal thirty."

On the next day, while Sheet-anchor Tom stood upon the quarter-deck directing his divers, a man—one of the beach-combers—came alongside in a skiff, with a load of fruits which he offered for sale.

He boarded the ship, and while disposing of his stock, carefully scrutinized the crew, counting twenty-five besides the divers. The latter were just rising to the surface of the sea, into which they had dived a few minutes previously.

"Well," shouted Tom, "any thing this time?"

"Ay, ay," was the response, "we've found it."

The crew cheered.

"Clear away the tackles!" shouted Tom.

Accordingly the tackles were cleared, and the chain-hooks lowered under water.

The divers plunged beneath the surface once more, to reappear soon after, shouting, "Haul away!"

The men seized the rope, and in a few minutes the valuable chest, covered with mud and sand, was hoisted aboard. In the mud, Toby Slivers noticed a number of little insects, half inclosed in blue shells, resembling those of snails. With his knife he picked out these curious insects and deposited them in his box, much delighted with his acquisition. The beach-comber now left the ship, and repaired to his comrades with the news of what he had seen.

"Did you count the crew?" inquired the leader of the gang.

"Yes—twenty-five."

"And we are twenty-one. We can manage matters if we work right."

Night closed darkly around the ship. Two men forward and one aft were the only watchers aboard.

"What's that?" inquired one of those on the knightheads, pointing directly ahead.

The other looked, and thought at first he could make out the dim outline of a human figure moving along toward the ship. To assure himself upon this point, he crawled out on the jib-boom and peered through the darkness. He could now see nothing, but he thought he heard a faint splash, as

of a paddle striking the water. He listened intently, but soon even this noise was stopped.

"It can be nothing, after all," he thought, "but a fish, wheeling along through the sea."

He returned to the deck, and was conversing with his ship-mate, when the latter, suddenly pausing, clutched him by the arm.

"Hark!"

A noise, as of something pounding under the ship's bows, was heard. Both men crawled upon the knightheads, and peered over, but were unable to see any thing. In fact, the water under them was veiled by a shadow of intense blackness.

"A wave striking the craft, probably," said one of the men; and both returned to the deck.

At intervals they heard that low, pounding noise, which, however, still sounded so much like that made by a rolling billow, that they gave it no particular attention.

Soon the noise was hushed, but it was followed by a curious gurgling, like that of a drowning man.

"A whirlpool sweeping past the ship," said one of the look-outs.

The noise continuing, proved that it was caused by something else.

One of the men, procuring a lantern, held it over the bows, when they noticed that the water under them was curiously agitated, as if from some disturbing influence beneath it.

They concluded, however, that it was caused by part of a sunken rock having given way, the water rushing into the cavity. Soon they were alarmed by a roaring sound, as of a torrent pouring into the hold. Again they used the lantern, when one of them, with an exclamation, pointed to the bobstay. This, which had hitherto occupied a position above water, now was submerged nearly a foot! Nor was this all: for, watching it keenly, the men perceived that it was sinking deeper and deeper every moment. In truth, there was no longer any doubt of a very startling fact—the vessel was settling by the head!

The look-outs gave the alarm, and up came all hands, Sheet-anchor Tom the first man.

He ordered a boat lowered, lanterns were provided, and he pulled under the vessel's bows.

"There is a hole in the craft," said he, turning to the ship's carpenter, who was with him; "see if you can feel it."

The carpenter, using his sounding-rod, discovered that there was an aperture about three feet under water.

"It must have been lately made," he said, "but I can not imagine by what."

"A sword-fish could not have done it," said Tom. "Some human being has been at work making the mischief."

All efforts to stop up the opening were useless. The water continued to pour into the hold, and in a short time the ship's bows were submerged almost to her sprit-sail yard. Then a grating noise was heard, and with a sudden thump, her keel forward settled upon a rock under water.

"Ay, ay, now, this is too bad!" cried Sheet-anchor Tom. "Just as we have succeeded in getting the chest, too! It will take us a long time to get the craft clear."

As he spoke, one of the men uttered a low exclamation, and pointed to the right. All eyes were instantly turned in that direction, when the outlines of a number of dim forms approaching, became visible. The stealthy dip of paddles was also heard.

"Ahoy, there!" shouted Tom. "Who are you?"

There was no response. The noise of the paddles continued a few minutes longer, then ceased, while the dim figures previously seen vanished in the darkness like so many phantoms.

Sheet-anchor Tom, intending to board his vessel at once, gave orders to his men to pull him round to the gangway. Just as he spoke, the sound of several pistol-shots was heard followed by groans and cries of alarm. These noises were followed by the quick trampling of feet, the thug of blows given and received, and other evidences of a struggle.

"This is strange enough!" cried Tom. "What has put it into my men to quarrel?"

"Captain!" exclaimed his first mate, clambering over into the main chains, "come quick! We are boarded! A set of cut-throats of some kind or other have boarded us by way of the stern, and have attacked us!"

This announcement filled Tom with astonishment.

"Lively, men—follow me!" he shouted, as the boat glided alongside the gangway.

He was soon aboard with his boat's crew. His men on deck had been driven forward, and were endeavoring to defend themselves against the assaults of a number of rough-looking men, whose faces, lighted by the glare of the ship's lantern, were distinctly visible.

"The muskets!" whispered Tom to his mate; "make haste and bring them. There are some in the cabin."

The mate started, but before he could return, Tom and his companions were furiously attacked by twice their number. In fact, the assailants having succeeded in killing and wounding several of the ship's crew, and in securing half a dozen of the others by hurling them into the main hold and fastening the hatches above them, were now in the majority. As may be imagined, these men were the beach-combers, who, having dispatched one of their number to scuttle the ship from the outside, and thus prevent the possibility of her getting under way, had afterward pulled round to her stern in the dark, and boarding her, as shown, surprised her crew.

Tom and his little party, picking up handspikes, defended themselves as well as they could, retreating, meanwhile, toward the cabin. From this the mate now emerged with the muskets, which he had carefully loaded.

"Ay, ay, men, now is your time; arm yourselves and give these fellows what they deserve!" cried Tom, as he snatched one of the weapons.

Taking aim at the head of the foremost of the assailing party, he fired, when the man tumbled backward to the deck. His companions, whose arms consisted only of knives and hatchets, then turned and fled forward, to join their comrades, many of whom were provided with pistols.

The crashing of the muskets and smaller fire-arms, together with the shouts and shrieks of the beach-combers, now made terrific din.

Both parties fought with desperation, and wherever the fighting was the hardest there Sheet-anchor Tom was sure to be found, dealing powerful blows with his musket, which he had not the time to reload. He cheered and encouraged his

men with all his might ; but the assailants so far outnumbered him and his handful of shipmates, that the latter were soon overpowered, and made prisoners. Tom, with his back to the foremast, was not yet taken. Attacked by half a dozen of his enemies, he still parried their blows with his musket. Finally the gigantic Jim Jones, gliding alongside of him, pointed a couple of pistols at his head.

"You're good grit, young man," said he, "and it goes ag'in my heart to kill ye. Surrender or you're a gone goose!"

As he spoke, one of his companions knocked Tom down with a blow upon the head from a stick of wood.

The captain, somewhat bewildered, endeavored to rise, but before he could do so, he was thrown upon his back and tied hand and foot.

"What do you want?" he inquired, as Jim Jones held a lantern above his head. "Why have you boarded my ship and attacked my crew?"

"P'raps you'll know before this time to morrow. You can't say I've been unmarciful to you though, seeing as me and my band has only killed three of your fellows. All the rest has been wounded or tumbled into the hold, where we must now put you, my gallant captain."

As he spoke, a figure was seen to clamber over the rail and slowly approach. The lantern's light, falling full upon this person, revealed William Clyde.

At sight of him Tom uttered a cry of surprise.

"Ah!" cried Jones, with a sneer, "so you've come at last."

"For my share of the jewels, certainly."

"Ay, but where mought you have been while the fightin' was a-goin on?"

"I—I was taking care of the canoes, of course. You needed some one to take care of your vessels."

"Not a bit of it, seeing as they were fastened to the ship before we boarded!" cried Jones, sternly. "Now, then, as you shirked fight, you may just 'bout ship and go back to the shore, as you won't get any thing of the treasure."

"But, that was the agreement!" exclaimed Clyde, turning pale with rage and mortification. "I was to have my share!"

"If you helped us fight yes; but as you did not—"

"How do you know I did not?"

"We all know it!" exclaimed one of the beach-combers; "several of us had our eyes on you, at intervals, during the fight. I saw you skulking in one of the canoes!"

"Pitch him overboard!" cried another voice.

"Ay, ay, over with him!" was echoed on all sides.

"No, no; shoot the rascal!" cried a fierce, haggard man, wearing ragged pants and a slouched felt hat; "that's the way to serve cowards!"

As he spoke, he pointed a loaded pistol toward Clyde and discharged it.

The ball passed through the young man's neck, and he fell, dying, alongside of Tom.

"Give him water!" said the latter, who could not view the agonies of the struggling wretch without pity. "Quick, bear a hand! See how his eyes are rolling in his head!"

One of the beach-combers brought some water to the sufferer, who, slightly reviving for a few minutes, now confessed to Sheet-anchor Tom, all the injuries he had secretly inflicted upon him.

In making this acknowledgment, he was probably influenced by the only real pang of remorse he had ever felt, for the pitying eyes of Tom, bent upon his face, awakened a spark of genuine good feeling in his heart.

The captain was surprised to hear that all the trouble he had experienced aboard the Flying Cloud, had been caused by Clyde's poisoning the skipper's mind against him. He also learned that the injurious reports which had prevented his obtaining command of a ship originated from the same source. The attempt to fire the Dolphin while fast to the Liverpool dock, was made by an agent from Clyde; and now, to crown all, Tom was informed that the late attack upon his ship was also suggested by his persevering enemy.

Soon after making his confession, Clyde breathed his last, when, with weights attached to his feet to make him sink, he was launched overboard.

Tom, being then thrust into the hold with the rest of the prisoners, Jim Jones at once commenced a search for the valuable chest. He ransacked the vessel fore and aft, but was unable to find what he looked for. Accordingly he sprung into the hold, pistol in hand, and confronting Sheet-

anchor Tom, commanded him to tell where he had secreted the chest.

"Never," answered the young captain, quietly ; "that chest is for a poor girl who has lost all her other property and is anxious to pay off her father's debts ; so you'll never find out from me where I have put the treasure."

"I suppose you know me, by this time," said Jim Jones, savagely, gritting his teeth. "You know I ain't to be trifled with. Tell me where that chest is or you're a dead dog."

"Fire away, if you choose," said Tom, coolly ; "I'm not afraid to die. As I said before you shall never learn from me where I have hid the chest."

The beach-comber looked at the young man steadily, a moment, and then thrust his pistol back into his belt.

"You're good grit, and before I kill you, I'll try some of the others."

"Men !" cried Tom, addressing the prisoners, "mind yourselves, now ; and don't let me hear one of you open his lips about that chest."

"Ay, ay, sir !" was the unanimous response.

Jones became furious ; he turned, glaring upon the captain, and again directed his pistol at his head.

"There's no chance of finding out where that chest is, while you are here !" he exclaimed. "I must end your interference."

He was about to pull the trigger of the pistol, when an empty barrel in one corner of the hold, suddenly was thrown over, disclosing the diminutive figure of Toby Slivers, the naturalist.

## CHAPTER VI.

## TOBY'S STRATAGEM.

THE sight of this unexpected apparition diverted the attention of Jim Jones.

"In the name of a thousand Jonahs, where did you come from?" he exclaimed.

"I—I—well, to tell the truth, I have been looking at some very curious specimens of wood-worms on the inside of that barrel," answered Slivers.

"Toby!" cried Tom, reproachfully, "I am afraid you were there during all the fighting. Surely, my man, you couldn't see wood-worms in the dark?"

"Yes I could," answered Toby—"because they emit a phosphorescent gleam, which is at once peculiar and astonishing. See here!"

He unstrapped his box from his back, but Tom checked him.

"This is no time for any such display," said he, sternly. "I suppose you are aware, notwithstanding your shirking duty, that the ship has fallen into the hands of our assailants?"

Toby hung his head.

"Really, captain," said he, "I would have assisted you had I been more conversant with the rules of combat; but to tell the truth, I am no fighting man."

A sudden idea seemed to cross the mind of Jones.

He advanced straight to the naturalist, and leveled his pistol at his head.

"Where is the chest?" cried he; "tell me at once, or I will blow out your brains!"

Toby turned pale.

"Really—I—I—don't know," he stammered.

"Yes, you do!" cried Jones, in a voice of thunder. "Tell me at once, or—"

A significant click of the pistol implied the rest.

"Not a word, Toby," cried Tom. "*I* still command my men, though I am prisoner!"

At this the naturalist closed his lips tightly, as if determined not to speak.

"A thousand thunders; this is too much!" roared Jones, taking aim at Tom. "You have said your last say!"

He discharged his weapon; but the bullet passed over Tom's head. Toby, springing forward, had caught the beach-comber's wrist.

Much enraged, Jones lifted the pistol to strike the naturalist, when the latter, holding up both hands, declared that he would tell him where the jewels were deposited.

"No—no—avast there, Toby!" cried Tom. "You must not do that."

The naturalist heeded him not.

"The jewels," said he, in a distinct voice, "were taken out of the chest, the wood of which had become rotten, and deposited in a cask which you will find in the run, rolled up in many folds of canvas!"

"Ay, ay, now, but you're a pitiful wretch, Toby," cried Tom contemptuously. "God have mercy upon you, my men, for robbing poor Isabel Morton of her property!"

"The cask," continued Toby, without seeming to heed the speaker, "is so heavy and so far under barrels and coils of rigging that it will take many men to remove it and get it up."

Tom's eyes flashed the most withering contempt upon the speaker. His shipmates also showed great indignation and gave the informer three dismal groans.

"This way, my men!" cried the exultant Jones, after he had carefully secured Toby's hands and feet with ropes; "this way! the prize is found!"

He hurried aft, followed by the whole gang of beach-combers, who, eager to behold the treasure, rushed in a body down into the cabin, provided with lanterns, and thence made their way into the run.

As the last man disappeared, Toby sung out in a distinct voice, "This way, steward, now is your time!"

Instantly the steward, who, like Toby, had been hidden during the whole combat, crawled out of an empty cask

"Here—quick—cut my lashings!" cried the naturalist.

The steward obeyed, when Toby, hurrying to the cabin, drew the hatch over the run opening, and fastened it by means of a crowbar, thus in a single instant making prisoners of the whole gang of beach-combers!

To return to the fore-hold and inform Tom of what he had done, was the work of an instant. With his knife he next severed the lashings of all his shipmates, who now rose to their feet.

"I acknowledge," said Toby, "that I was afraid to fight; but you perceive that I have contrived to help you."

"Ay, ay, you are better than I thought," said Tom, shaking hands with him.

With his shipmates he now repaired to the cabin, and secured the run hatch with extra fastenings, so as to preclude the possibility of the beach-combers escaping. The imprisoned men howled like enraged tigers when they discovered the trick which had been played them.

"The craft is fixed, anyhow!" cried Jones, "so that you can't get under way, and we can remain here as long as you can. We can set fire to the vessel, as to that matter!"

Tom knew very well that the speaker would not resort to any such desperate measure.

He looked at the clock in the state-room, and quietly informed his men that they might now "turn in," (go to bed) if they chose, and sleep for a few hours, as he would have plenty of work for them in the morning.

The fore-castle being submerged, the tired men stretched themselves about the decks, and were soon fast asleep. At daylight Tom roused them, and set them to work hoisting full casks and other heavy articles from the lower fore-hold, in order to lighten the ship forward.

The effect of this was soon made apparent. The casks being rolled aft, the ship's head kept gradually rising, and in a few hours her bows were so high out of water, that the hole which had been made in her timbers was plainly visible. While gangs of men were pumping the ship dry, the carpenter, who was an excellent workman, proceeded to repair the damage in the bow.

By noon of the next day his work was completed, when

the articles which had been hoisted from the hold being replaced, the ship's head settled to its proper level, and the vessel was discovered to be perfectly dry.

Tom now proceeded to get up his anchors, and before nightfall he was under way, gliding out of the bay.

A few days later he went into Rio Janeiro, for the double purpose of obtaining a cargo of valuable woods, coffee and sugar, and of surrendering the beach-combers to the proper authorities of the town. He was soon rid of the prisoners, who in due course of time were convicted and sentenced to the punishment they deserved.

Tom then weighed anchor, and with a light heart went bowling out of the harbor, homeward bound.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### DIFFICULTIES.

THE vessel, when a week out of port, was overtaken by a heavy gale from the north-west. The wind blew great guns, and the seas came rolling, booming and crashing along, sweeping the decks fore and aft. Tom had struck topgallant masts and yards, had battened down the hatches, lashed the boats securely, and made other preparations for the storm. Nevertheless, the ship lay far down upon her beam-ends; and she made such furious plunges that many an anxious glance was directed toward the swaying, jerking masts, which every moment seemed about to go by the board.

The violence of the gale kept increasing. At dark, Tom was obliged to put his craft before it, and scud under bare poles. He had good men in the top, keeping a look-out, but the darkness was so intense that no object could be seen further than fifteen fathoms ahead.

Suddenly one of the men uttered an exclamation and pointed a little off the weather-bow.

"It is a light," said his companion, and immediately added, in a loud voice, "Sail 'O!"

The shrill cry was heard through the din of the storm, and Tom came bounding forward. Springing into the fore-rigging, he watched the light with an anxious eye. The stranger was evidently crossing his bows, but it seemed doubtful that she would pass in time to avoid a collision.

"Steady there, as you can go!" shouted the young captain to the helmsman.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the response; but, even as it came, the ship, lifted upon the crest of a tremendous sea, was carried forward with the speed of a rocket.

Far down, in a hollow between the waves, Tom now beheld the dark hull of the stranger, rolling and pitching directly ahead of him. He heard the screaming of the other captain and his crew, and thought he could also distinguish female voices, from which he concluded that the vessel was a passenger craft. The danger of a collision was imminent. Caught in a trough of the sea, it seemed as if the other vessel could not pass in time to escape the Dolphin. Hurled downward by the careering billow, the latter vessel must have been dashed against the stranger, but for the ready decision and activity of her young commander. With a couple of bounds, he had already reached the wheel, and now putting it hard down, he brought the vessel's head up all of a sudden as she plunged into the water-valley, which was partially sheltered from the force of the gale.

As a natural consequence of this maneuver, the Dolphin passed the stranger's stern diagonally, almost escaping her. The crashing of her spanker boom was heard, as the bows of the other craft struck it, snapping it short off, while a grinding, jarring noise, with the jingling sound of glass, proclaimed that the two hulls had grazed in a rather unpleasant manner. But for Tom's activity, however, in luffing up in time, the vessels must have come in direct collision and gone down together.

A few hours later the gale slightly abated, when Tom loosed the close-reefed mainsail, and set a double-reefed foresail. The ship was now dashing along at a great rate, rolling almost as much as before, and with a swashing, gurgling noise, which indicated the presence of water in her hold. Tom therefore ordered the pumps rigged, and very soon their

dismal clanging was heard. At daylight, when the storm had sufficiently abated, the carpenter was dispatched to make an examination. He reappeared very soon, reporting that the water neither seemed to gain nor diminish. In his estimation the leak was somewhere in the vicinity of the rudder-post, and had been caused by the collision, but the damage could not be repaired until better weather.

Tom glanced dubiously toward the north-east, where the gathering of a number of gloomy clouds, long and funnel-shaped, seemed to proclaim a change of wind, and with it another blow. In fact, the change soon took place, when the wind came howling along with redoubled fury, tearing the main-top-sail to shreds before it could be taken in, and carrying the staysail straight up into the air like a balloon.

The water gained rapidly upon the weary men, working at the pumps, and Tom believed that the *Dolphin* was a doomed craft.

He set the hands to work rigging a raft, dexterously assisting in and superintending the work of lashing the timbers. In a short time the raft was ready, when Tom ordered the hoisting up of the jewels, which had previously been transferred from the cask to a large chest.

Toby Slivers, with his valuable box strapped to his shoulders, and his blue umbrella under his arm, now came trembling from the cabin. He was about to fall upon his knees and pray, when Tom ordered him to help the hands launch the raft. This was soon alongside, and the chest of jewels was then carefully lowered and secured to it.

Toby then jumped upon the floating platform, and commenced lashing himself to a log.

"Avast there, what are you about?" cried Tom. "There's no hurry about that; in fact, the craft may yet weather the gale; so just come back here again."

Accordingly Toby endeavored to come back, but in such an awkward manner that a bight of one of the ropes holding the raft caught round him and jerked him overboard between the ship and the floating mass of timbers.

He howled and screeched most dismally; in fact, his situation was quite perilous, as the rope was slipping up around his neck, to say nothing of the danger of his being jammed.

Tom, always ready to help a fellow-creature, jumped upon the raft, and endeavored to disengage the rope from Toby, but all in vain. It was now held so taut by the pitching of the ship that it could not be loosened.

"Cut the rope, men!" shouted the skipper; "there's no help for it!"

A blow from a hatchet severed the strands at once, and freed Toby. Tom hauled him up, when the naturalist, falling forward, lay for several moments nearly motionless from fright. The captain, thinking he was badly hurt, bent anxiously over him, but soon had the satisfaction of seeing him yawn and stretch out his arms. Tom therefore sung out for a rope, which, when thrown to him, he fastened around Toby's breast.

"Heave!" he shouted, and a moment later had the satisfaction of seeing the naturalist pulled aboard. He was about to follow, when a disagreeable accident took place—the parting of the only rope which now held the raft!

A huge sea, sweeping over the ship, and rolling along to leeward, took up the mass of timbers and carried it rapidly away in the gathering darkness. Tom saw the ship fall off as the helmsman was ordered to put his wheel up; at the same moment, caught by a counter-sea, the vessel rolled, plunging furiously, there was a crashing sound, and over went the foremast, top-bamper and all, alongside.

The young captain watched the ship until the darkness and distance shut her from his sight; then glanced around him, feeling rather uncomfortable.

"Ay, ay, now, but this is too bad," he said to himself, as he sat down on a log. "I'm afraid I'll never see the ship again."

Then he looked at the carefully lashed chest.

"That's safe, at any rate," he muttered. "Isabel's jewels! May God carry 'em safe to that beautiful girl, even if I perish!"

There was a piece of chalk in his pocket, and the thought occurred to him that, as soon as it was light, he would mark Isabel's name and address on the inside of the lid. If he should perish, the chest might possibly fall into the hands of some honest captain, who would see that it was forwarded to its destination.

The long hours wore away. At daylight, Tom felt hungry and thirsty, but, as neither provision nor water had been put on the raft, previous to its drifting clear, he was unable to refresh himself. He looked round him in all directions, but a thick mist covering the agitated waters not far off, limited his vision. The mist finally cleared, but no sign of the Dolphin or of any other craft was visible.

The gale, meanwhile, raging with unabated fury, seemed to sound a dismal knell in his ears. He feared that the Dolphin had gone down during the night, and that the only boat in the ship had been swamped, with the crew. Weary, and full of sad forebodings, but endeavoring to keep up his spirits in spite of all, he lashed himself to a log, and with his head resting upon the precious chest, soon fell asleep. He slumbered many hours; when he woke it was past noon, and the sun shone from an unclouded sky. The gale had gone down considerably, and the great seas sparkled in the bright rays as they tossed their foaming crests on high. Glancing astern of him, Tom now beheld a sail—evidently a topsail schooner—bearing down toward him!

His heart bounded for joy; he sprung upon the chest, tossing his cap, in the exuberance of his spirits.

"Ay, ay, now, that's what I call Providence—Providence doing the thing in the right way!" he exclaimed.

Meanwhile, on came the schooner, tearing along through the water at a great rate.

"Ahoy, there! Mind you don't run me down!"

A dark-faced man, holding a speaking-trumpet, came to the quarter-rail, and stood looking at Tom without replying.

Finally he said something to his men, his main yard was hauled aback, and a boat lowered and manned. When it was alongside of the raft, the captain, who stood in the bow, leaped upon the platform and held out his hand to Tom.

"How long have you been in this situation?" he inquired, in what struck the castaway as being a very unpleasant voice.

The young man explained, not stating, however, that he was a captain, and the other then informed him that his schooner was the Sea-Witch, Captain Crowe, bound from New Orleans to New York, with a load of cotton.

"What have you in that chest?" he carelessly inquired, as the men assisted Tom in transferring it to the boat.

"Sheet-anchor" shrugged his shoulders. He neither liked the question nor the skipper's manner of asking it.

"I decline answering you," he said, feeling in his pocket to make sure that the key was there. "Ay, ay, you must not ask me that."

He smiled as he spoke, and so did the stranger captain, the latter thinking that the chest contained Tom's wardrobe. This, he thought, was perhaps so scant and dilapidated that the young man did not wish to speak of it. The boat soon was alongside, and the chest hoisted aboard.

"Where is it to go?" inquired one of the men, glancing inquiringly at Captain Crowe.

"I don't know—forward I suppose."

"Ay, ay, forward," answered Tom, thinking it best to pass as a foremast hand. He would stand a better chance in the forecastle of the contents of the chest being undiscovered than in the cabin. The skipper was evidently of a prying, avaricious disposition, whereas the foremast hands could have no reason to suppose that one of their own class would carry any thing more valuable than a few clothes and little "knick-nacks" in his "donkey," (chest.)

Accordingly the latter was stowed away in the forecastle, when one of the hands, a tall, broad-shouldered, low-browed fellow, offered a part of his bunk to Tom. The young man declined it, saying he would prefer to sleep on top of his chest in calm weather, and in heavy weather behind it.

"You're a queer chap," said the man. "You'll find your bones will suffer some if you sleep in that way."

"A few bruises won't hurt me; but I thank you, all the same, for your kind offer."

The man threw himself back, and was soon snoring.

Then Tom felt a hand on his shoulder, and turning, beheld a grinning lad of seventeen.

"Now just you look out for that chap," he whispered. "He'll steal every thing of value in your chest if you don't; he's a thief."

"He looks like one," answered Tom, surveying the man's great red nose, which projected above the side of the bunk.

"If you've anything in the way of grog in your chest, you'll soon miss it," continued the lad, with an inquiring glance, directed toward the "donkey."

"I *have* nothing in the way of grog, youngster," answered Tom, "but I was going to ask you if *you* had. I've fasted for some time, do you see, and would like a few drops to refresh me."

The boy said he had no liquor; but he at once proceeded to the galley and procured some good, strong coffee, with a pan full of meat and potatoes, which he promptly placed before the castaway.

Tom thanked the lad, and ate heartily. An hour after, he went on deck, and mounting into the fore-rigging, looked to see if he could yet discover any sign of the Dolphin or her boat. He could not, and he descended to the deck with a heavy sigh.

"Young man," sung out the captain, "have you had any thing to eat?"

"Ay, ay."

"Well, just come aft here, then, and coil up this main-brace. If you eat, you must expect to work."

"My dear sir," answered Tom, "I thank you with all my heart for the meal I have had, but, do you see, I am able to pay for my passage, and would therefore prefer going in your craft as fore-castle passenger."

The skipper's eyes twinkled.

"It's all right," said he, "although I must own that it seems rather out of place—a common sailor turning passenger! Ho, ho!"

"I think it's natural," answered Tom, "that a man like me, who has seen such hard times, should prefer playing the gentleman' for once in his life."

Slap! slap! bang! crack! was heard aloft.

Glancing up, Tom at once perceived that one of the fore-topsail clews had parted the sheet, and that the canvas was flapping about in a way which threatened to jerk the yard loose. If not secured, the canvas, although it was new and of good finish, must be torn to shreds.

"Hard up with that wheel!" roared the skipper.

"Hard *down* with that wheel!" shouted Tom, forgetting,

under the impulse of the moment, that he was aboard another man's vessel.

The helmsman, instinctively obeying the cheery voice of the young captain, had actually begun to put his wheel down, before the angry eyes of his own skipper warned him to move it the other way.

"Now, then, what in the name of Beelzebub, do you mean by giving orders aboard my craft?" exclaimed Crowe, advancing toward the castaway.

"It was a mistake of mine," answered Tom. "I forgot where I was. It would have been better, though, if you had put your wheel down, as you will soon see."

The speaker was right. A puff of wind catching the sail, as the schooner fell off, tore it from the yard and carried it away to leeward.

The men soon had another on deck, and were getting it ready. Tom took a step or two aft, with the intention of helping them, when he suddenly remembered that he was a passenger; so, putting his hands in his pockets and whistling, he returned forward.

Just then, glancing through the scuttle into the fore-castle, Tom saw one of the watch below—the man who had invited him to share his bunk—very busy inspecting the valuable chest, and endeavoring to peer through a crack in one side of it. The fellow seemed much interested, and his eyes shone like beetles! Could it be possible, Tom thought, that he had guessed the contents of the chest?

He watched the man narrowly, and finally saw him take a crowbar and endeavor to pry up the lid. This was too much for the young captain's patience.

"Why, you miserable lubber, what are you doing there—trying to open an honest man's chest? What do you mean?"

And springing into the fore-castle, he confronted the thief, who grinned and showed his teeth.

"Now, then," he exclaimed, raising the crowbar, as if to deal Tom a blow on the head, "just you keep a still tongue about what you've seen, or it'll be the worse for you. My name's Currel!"

"Upon my word," replied Tom, "you are the most impudent thief I ever heard of!"

So saying, he wrenched the crowbar from the man's hand, by a sudden skillful movement.

"If I ever catch you meddling with my chest again," said he, "I'll tie a rope around you and have you towed overboard."

The man drew his knife, evidently hoping thus to intimidate Tom, who, however, told him to put the weapon back in its sheath, or he would crack his skull like a nut.

With a sullen frown, the fellow sheathed his knife, and muttering something about being even with Tom yet, retired to a corner.

Suddenly, he looked up and grinned.

"See here!" he exclaimed; "d'ye suppose I was in earnest about what I did? 'D'ye suppose I care for a few old clothes, such as is in that donkey? I've clothes enough of my own, I hope. I knowed you was watching me, and so made believe, just to see how you'd act, that I wanted to open the chest."

Tom, however, guessed that this was mere pretense, judging that the man really suspected there was something very valuable in the chest, and he therefore resolved to be on the alert, at all times, during the passage.

Toward night the gale abated considerably, and the seas went down. There was a full moon, shedding a clear, soft light over all objects, and Tom could make out the gleam of a white sail off the weather-bow. He was finally stretched at full length near the fore-hatch, looking up at the white, swelling canvas, and reflecting as to the fate of the Dolphin and her crew, when he noticed the schooner's foremast hands—ten men in all—gathered forward of the windlass, conversing in low tones.

He was quite certain he heard the word "chest" several times repeated, and therefore, believing that the conversation had reference to his property, he raised his head to listen. The sailors, perceiving the movement, instantly stopped talking, and began carelessly walking the decks. Tom had no doubt now as to what had been the subject of their conversation, and he resolved to keep a still more vigilant watch upon his chest.

He stationed himself near the scuttle, and, folding his arms,

quietly turned his gaze upon the giant Currel, who was lounging near the knightheads. Now and then he saw this man thrust his hand under his jacket, as if he there held something very precious, and the young captain at once concluded that it was either a knife, a pistol, or a bottle of grog.

"Halloa there, mate!" exclaimed the castaway, "what's that you have under your jacket?"

The man colored, and seemed a little confused.

"Oh, nothing particular," he answered. "Nothing but tobacco. Will you have a chew?"

"No, thank you," answered Tom; "I don't use it."

Believing that Currel had spoken the truth—for of all luxuries at sea tobacco is esteemed the greatest—Tom thought no more upon the matter, but concluded that he would go below, and just take a look at his property, to see if it was all right. Accordingly, he descended into the fore-castle, and by the light of the swaying lamp, carefully inspected the lock of the chest. Glad to perceive that it had not yet been tampered with, he was about to turn away, when he saw a shadow fall upon the lid before him. He looked up quickly, and caught a glimpse of an evil-looking face, as it was withdrawn from the opening in the scuttle. Although he had seen it but an instant, yet he felt quite certain it was Currel's. He sprung to the foot of the ladder, and was ascending quickly—had, in fact, nearly reached the opening—when a heavy blow upon his head, from a hammer, or some other instrument, knocked him almost senseless from his position. He fell heavily, but the shock of the fall did him good, by partially restoring to him his half-benumbed faculties. He staggered to his feet to confront Currel, who was preparing to deal him another blow, with a heavy cooper's hammer grasped in his right hand.

But for the top lining of Tom's cap being thickly padded with cotton, the first blow he had received must at once have deprived him of all sense and motion. Well knowing that a second would have that effect, in spite of the padding, the young man, weakened as he was, at once sprung upon the giant, and grasped him by the throat with one hand, holding the upraised arm with the other. Then, lifting his right knee, he gave the robber such an effective blow in the stomach that the wretch fairly gasped for breath.

In fact, the victory must have been won by Tom, but for the interference of several men, two of whom threw the young captain backward, while a third proceeded to tie his arms with strong cords, and to gag him with a pump-bolt.

The giant raised the hammer to strike the prostrate man, but one of the sailors now interposed.

"No use of shedding blood," said he. "There's no need of it. The chap is fixed so that he can't trouble us."

The man turned away with a sullen growl of dissatisfaction, and snatching a crowbar from the hands of one of his shipmates, he proceeded at once to pry open the lid of the chest.

Tom's heart swelled almost to bursting with indignation.

"Ay, ay, now," he exclaimed, mentally, "is it possible that this precious prize that I've had so much trouble to procure is now to be taken away? that Isabel is to lose her property—the means of—"

An exclamation of unbounded delight from the thief, who had now broken open the lid, interrupted the captain's reflections.

The robber's eyes fairly seemed to snap with greedy exultation, as the blaze of the precious stones burst upon his sight.

"I told you, lads," he said, addressing his shipmates, "that the chest was too heavy to hold nothing but a sailor's toggery. Besides, I saw the gleam of these things, though I didn't think then they were jewels, when I pried up the lid t'other watch with my knife."

The rest of the crew now came into the fore-castle. They crowded round the chest, gesticulating and uttering exclamations of delight.

"Stand aside," said Currel, "and let us divide these pretty things. Of course, as I've had the most trouble in the matter, the biggest share belongs to me, do you see?"

"We don't see any thing of the kind!" exclaimed a shipmate; "the shares must be even."

"No, no; the biggest part belongs to us four," said another, indicating himself and three of his companions. "We planned the whole affair."

The conspirators could not agree, and angry words followed. From words the party came to blows, and their shouts and shrieks, as they fought, resounded through the fore-castle. One of the disputants, falling against the chest, the lid closed with a click; at the same moment the captain and his mates, armed with revolvers, came rushing into the fore-castle.

"What's the meaning of this?" the skipper angrily exclaimed. "Have I not told you again and again that there must be no fighting in my craft?"

The combatants, bloody and disfigured, at once stopped their work, and stood looking confusedly from one to the other.

"What is the cause of the quarrel?" continued the captain, not a little surprised to see Tom lying gagged and bound.

"Well, the fact is," said Currel, who, like the rest of his shipmates, did not care that the skipper, who was a very avaricious man, should know about the treasure, "the fact is that—that—do you see, this man" (pointing to Tom) "wanted to have some grub that the cook had made for our breakfast. He wanted to eat it *now*, and some of the men sided with him. As he *insisted* in the matter, a few of us threw him down and served him as you see. The rest, offering resistance, we have had a fight, sir, which we couldn't help."

"So this man," said Captain Crowe, looking at Tom, "is the cause of the trouble! You've treated him wrong, though, for all that, as he's a passenger, and means to pay *well* for the passage. Don't let me ever hear of your acting so again; if I do, I'll have you all seized up and flogged."

The men were quite satisfied with the way in which Currel had deceived the skipper, and not one opened his lips to contradict the statement made. As to Tom, they believed *he* would not do so, either, as he would not care to let the avaricious captain know about his treasure. Some words dropped by the young man, soon after he came aboard, had convinced them that he at once divined the grasping nature of Crowe.

The latter now unfastened the cords with which Tom was tied, and relieved him of the gag.

"You had better take up your quarters in the cabin," said

he. "You seem to be always hungry, and this will get you into another quarrel with my men, if you stay here."

"Hungry!" cried Tom, rubbing his bruised head. "Well, now, I don't know about that! I—"

His glance fell upon his chest, and he remained silent.

"I will remove to the cabin at once," he said, after a moment's pause, "if you will order some of your hands to *carry my chest.*"

The men exchanged glances, and looked much disappointed. There was no help for it, however, for the captain now gave the required order, and the hands were obliged to carry the chest into the state-room. Tom then procured ropes, and fastened the lid down securely, lashing the chest to a couple of ringbolts.

The captain and all his officers excepting the one who had the watch, and who had been fast asleep during the disturbance, now retired to their berths.

As for Tom he could not sleep. He felt quite uneasy regarding the chest, for he doubted not that Currel and his companions, sooner than to lose their prize altogether, would speak of the treasure to the skipper, and make some agreement with him as to taking possession of, and sharing it. He was still brooding over the matter, when daylight crept upon the sea.

"Sail 'O!" cried a clear voice on deck. Tom sprung through the companion, to behold the Dolphin scarcely two ships' lengths astern, and to comprehend that it was her sail which he had seen on the previous evening, gleaming in the moonlight off the weather-bow.

To spring upon the round-house and wave his hat was the work of a moment. He was at once recognized, and the boat being lowered, was soon alongside the schooner. Tom paid the skipper of the schooner as he had agreed to do, for his passage, which luckily had proved such a short one. Crowe was surprised on discovering that Tom was the Dolphin's captain, and apologized for not having perceived his rank before. The young man said it was no consequence, and sprung after his precious chest, which, to the intense mortification of the schooner's hands, had been already lowered into the boat.

Soon after, Tom was aboard his own ship, relating his adventures to his mate. The latter then stated that he had contrived to stop the leak near the Dolphin's stern-post with some pieces of canvas, until the storm abated, when the carpenter easily repaired the damage. The mate had also commenced getting up a new topmast in place of the one which had been carried away. The men were hard at work at it now.

"We have all been worrying so much about you," continued the mate, that I am afraid we have made but little progress as yet. We concluded that we should never see either you or your precious chest again; for yesterday, just before evening, we fell in with the raft, and believed that you, with your property, had been washed away from it."

The captain shook hands with his mate, and thanked him heartily for his kind sympathy, after which he went below to get some sleep.

The ship, meanwhile, bowled merrily upon her course, the men working away at the new topmast with glad hearts, now that Tom, their gallant captain, was restored to them.

Two months later he was anchored off Liverpool, when, among the first who boarded him from shore was his old friend Turk.

"Ay, ay, now, my old chum, it does my heart good to see you!" cried honest Tom. "How is—how is—"

"Well?" said Turk, thrusting both hands into his pockets.

"How is—is— You know—"

Turk's countenance fell.

"Lively—nothing has happened to her?"

"Ay, ay, she's gone," answered Turk, dolefully.

Tom grew deadly pale, and clutched his friend by the arm.

"Ay, ay, now," he groaned, "this is too bad. Turk—Turk—I never can bear it."

"You must," said Turk, turning his eyes to windward, perhaps to hide a tear, "you must bear it as I have done."

"You?"

"Ay, ay, I r'ally got attached to her, d'ye see. I had put a new coat of paint on her, and made every thing shipshape, when we ran on the Scilly Rocks, and that was the last of her."

"What are you talking about?"

"Why, the coal-schooner, of course. Blast it, man, if I ever thought I could get to loving any thing so much with only two masts!"

"I was speaking of Isabel."

"Circumstances alters cases!" ejaculated Turk, throwing his quid overboard. "If it was she you were speaking of, why, if it was she, do you see, she isn't gone like the schooner, though she's like to go in another way."

"Explain yourself, Turk. Heave ahead, for God's sake!"

"Well, then, you hadn't been gone three months, when as fine a looking chap as ever I set my eyes on—as noble-looking as a lord—gets to calling on Isabel at the brick house."

"Who was he?"

"Can't tell that; but one thing, d'ye see, is quite plain. Isabel ain't got any objection to his callin' on her, seem' as he visits her sometimes twice a week. It's a lover, I should say, and they'll get spliced soon, too, I'm pretty sartain; so you'd better give up all thoughts of her, and turn your mind to some one in your own way of life."

Tom leaned against the rail for support, and heaved a sigh.

Then he held out his hand to Turk.

"It's all up with me," said he. "I'll never think of woman again. I *had* thought of settling down, but that idea is done with now."

That very day the jewels were sent to the astonished Isabel. Turk, following the carman, who carried the load into the house, explained matters in a few words.

"And he—that noble Captain Tom—has been to all this trouble for me?" cried the young girl, blushing deeply.

"Ay, and much more he'll do for you, ma'am; any thing in the world that you require," answered Turk.

Wishing to benefit his chum all he could, he then explained about the benevolent trick of the manuscripts.

Isabel was still more surprised. Her heart beat fast; smiles and blushes chased each other over her face.

"Tell the captain I should like to see him to-morrow, to—  
to thank him," she said, softly. "Tell him, also, that the treasure has come at a very good time, as I have all along been very—very poor."

Turk conveyed the message to Tom, who made his appearance, neatly attired, before Isabel the next morning.

There was another person in the room; the young man who had lately called so often upon the young girl. He was a tall, military-looking personage, of thirty-five, with a neatly-trimmed mustache, pleasant face, and clear-blue eyes.

Isabel introduced him as the late Mr. Morton's younger brother, captain in the —th infantry, just returned from foreign service. The young man having heard, through a friend, of Isabel's loss and pecuniary troubles, had, on arriving at Liverpool, hastened to her assistance.

Now Tom's whole countenance lighted up with joy, and he gave the captain's hand a true "sailor grip."

After a few moments' conversation, the soldier left the room. Tom's old bashfulness then came upon him; he colored and was much confused.

"How can I ever repay you for what you have done for me?" said Isabel, softly.

He looked at her, and reading coy encouragement in her eyes, he lost control of himself, and hurriedly stammered out his love for her.

Then he drew back as if frightened at what he had done, and turned as if to leave her.

"I have gone too far," he said, much confused. "How dared I think that you—that you could return the love of a rude seafaring man like me? I have made a fool of myself—ay, ay, a fool, sure enough," added Tom, as he laid his hand on the knob of the door.

"You are mistaken," answered Isabel, in a voice scarcely above a whisper. "Stay," and she endeavored to clasp his great arm with her tiny white hands; "I love you, noble captain—I loved you from the first!"

Almost intoxicated with joy, Sheet-anchor Tom covered the blushing face with kisses.

"Mine—mine at last!"

He held her in his arms and looked down upon her drooping lids with a world of love and passion in his great eyes.

There is not much more to add.

The lovers were married two months after Tom's return. The jewels brought a hundred thousand dollars, with part of

which Isabel paid her father's debts. As Sheet-anchor Tom had ten thousand dollars laid up in an American bank, he was able to contribute a mite toward filling up the gap left by the payment alluded to.

He repaired to America with his happy wife, and purchased a neat residence on the outskirts of New York city, where the twain now reside, happy and contented.

Toby Slivers, who continues to "grub" for worms, snails, butterflies, beetles and other insects, visits them every time he captures a "curiosity."

Turk also visits them at long intervals. He still follows the sea, and often takes pleasure in relating to his shipmates the story of SHEET-ANCHOR TOM.



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